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RUSSIA IN  
NINETEEN TWENTY-SIX



# RUSSIA IN NINETEEN TWENTY-SIX

*By*

R. F. & M. S. McWilliams

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## FOREWORD

A VISIT to Russia during the past summer for the purpose of attending international conferences at Helsingfors and Amsterdam afforded an opportunity too good to be lost of seeing for ourselves the experiment now being made in Russia. Since our college days we have been keenly interested in political and economic movements, and because of that interest have, since the Revolution, and especially during the past year, sought to follow developments in Russia with the open mind of the student. It was with no thought of writing a book that we entered upon this adventure, but solely with the purpose of testing for ourselves the truth of much that we had read. What is here set down is the result of our observations in the form of a woman's impressions of what she saw and heard, and a man's effort to estimate what is happening and what is likely to happen in this rapidly changing Russia.

ROLAND F. McWILLIAMS,  
MARGARET S. McWILLIAMS.

*Winnipeg,  
November 7, 1926.*





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# RUSSIA IN NINETEEN TWENTY-SIX

## INTRODUCTION

To understand the Russia of to-day it is necessary to bear in mind some of the main facts about the country itself and its people and their past experience. Geography and history are two of the greatest factors in moulding the character and the institutions of a people, and in Russia as in other countries the conditions of the present are the products of the past.

Russia in Europe is a vast, almost unbroken plain covering an area of more than 1,500,000 square miles, or larger than all the rest of Europe and nearly twice as large as all that part of the United States east of the Mississippi. Even if the northern areas be excluded there remains an area 1000 miles square, almost the whole of which possesses great natural wealth, agricultural, timber or mineral. Agriculture is by far the predominant interest, there being only two cities of over 500,000 out of a total population of 140,000,000 and only six over 200,000. As the result of the recent wars Russia lost to various new States a strip of territory down its west side which contained a population of 33,000,000, a number exceeding the entire population of all but

three of the twenty-five States into which Western Europe is now divided.

But immense as is the territory of Russia lying west of the Ural Mountains, which mark the boundary between Europe and Asia, the territory beyond is very much larger. The total area of the Soviet Federation is over 8,000,000 square miles. To cross the country by rail one must change the clock eight times as compared with four times when crossing America. We may think that Siberia is a vast but bleak and barren country, but the fact is that it has a population larger than that of Canada, and in the generation before the war its proved fertility was attracting a similar tide of immigration.

Over this vast area is spread a population which before the war numbered 172,000,000, and which in spite of its losses is still more than four times as large as that of either Britain or France. More than eighty per cent. of the people are engaged in agriculture and only seven per cent. in manufacturing. The black earth area of the Ukraine and the Volga valley had before the war become one of the greatest grain-producing centres of the world, with 250,000,000 acres under cultivation. In the southern provinces tobacco, tea and cotton are grown extensively. In timber resources Russia is one of the richest of countries, with forests of almost unlimited extent as yet scarcely touched. Its mineral resources are also rich and varied. Gold, silver, copper, platinum, coal, oil and water-power are found in abundance, though much of the country is as undeveloped as parts of Canada. The measure of its capacity may be gauged by the fact that between

1859 and 1913 the population increased by almost 100,000,000.

The history of Russia divides itself into three periods marked by the successive changes of the capital city. We may have entered upon a fourth period marked by a similar change. In the first period the centre of Russian life was the city of Kiev, and trade was the source of its prosperity. Like the American and Canadian prairies, Russia is traversed by great continental rivers which were for long years the only means of communication. About the time of the Saxon King Alfred trade grew up between the Baltic and the Black Seas, and centred at the strategic location of Kiev on the upper waters of the Dnieper River. Over this route the same Norsemen whom we know found their way and established kingdoms which the shrewd Slav traders welcomed for the sake of protection. For three hundred years this centre flourished and advanced in wealth and civilization, to which churches and walls still standing bear testimony. In the tenth century Christianity was introduced and Kiev became and remained for centuries the religious centre of the Russian people.

The prosperity of this early kingdom was destroyed by the invasions of nomadic tribes of Turkish and Mongolian origin against whom the open plains of the Ukraine offered no defence. The progress of civilization stopped while these invasions lasted and the Slav races fought for mere existence. In the early thirteenth century came the strongest and most terrible of these hordes, the Tartars, and for 250 years these people scourged the great plains, destroying towns, levying tribute, crushing every evidence

of Russian independence. While Western Europe developed its own type of civilization and its wealth and commerce the Russians engaged in a five-hundred-years struggle which in the end saved Europe from Mongolian domination.

Out of this struggle grew the second Russian kingdom with its capital at Moscow. At the head of navigation on a tributary of the Volga and in the centre of the country there grew up a new power under the shelter of the Kremlin fortress which has ever since been the heart of Russian life. A century of wars established here a State which dominated its neighbours and in time became strong enough to drive back the Tartars. Strong, ambitious, ruthless Czars built up in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries an autocracy which united all the Russias under the common bonds of race, church, and state, and extended their dominions to the eastern limits of Europe.

The third period begins with that most remarkable man Peter the Great. Learning the arts of Western Europe by personal experience, Peter set himself to the development of his empire on Western lines and erected a new capital at the entrance of the Baltic Sea in order to bring his country into direct touch with the West. St. Petersburg always was a Western city in a semi-Eastern country, while Moscow is the expression of all that is most characteristic of Russian life. For two centuries Peter and his successors drove the country ahead, expanding in every direction, seeking outlets to the Pacific, the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, threatening Britain's lines of communication and blocking Germany's

ambitions towards the East. It is a marvellous record of achievement, but it was built on the sands of a ruthless autocracy and an ignorant people. With great difficulty the Czarist power survived the shock of the defeat by the Japanese, but when the storm of the Great War descended upon it, it fell, and great was the fall of it.

To form any fair estimate of the Russia of to-day it is necessary to bear in mind the terrible experience through which the country passed in the years 1917 to 1921. Before there was a revolution at all the Czar's government had almost broken down. The losses suffered in the war had been far greater than those of any other belligerent, the money had greatly depreciated, the administration was corrupt and incompetent, the populace seething with discontent. Then came a succession of revolutions with every element struggling for the mastery, and the most extreme element surviving; then four years of the most virulent civil war fought without quarter on both sides; then the most complete revolution of economic life ever attempted; and after that two years of famine in the richest area of the land. Whatever one may think of the policies or methods of the Bolsheviki, it is clearly only bare justice for the observer to keep these facts in mind when attempting to evaluate the condition of the country at the present time and the measure of success achieved by the government. It has also to be remembered that the revolutionary forces of all shades have been struggling for nearly one hundred years. Revolution after revolution has been attempted, and demonstrations against the rulers have been innumerable,



but always they have been repressed with a vigour and brutality impossible in Western countries. Wholesale executions, life imprisonment, banishment to the wilds of Siberia, Cossack horsewhips, the secret police, expulsion from the Universities, these have been the common lot of all rebels and their sympathizers for generations. Is it to be wondered at that when the bonds were at last broken there poured out a flood of brutal vindictive retaliation which recognized no distinction between the just and the unjust and spared neither life nor property? One may believe almost any story of violence and excess that has come out of these years, but these are no more the true Revolution than was the Reign of Terror a true expression of the ideas or accomplishments of the great French Revolution.

Certain other considerations may be disposed of because they are not really in dispute. The present system in Russia is not a free democracy and scarcely claims to be so; it is frankly a dictatorship of the proletariat. Long ago the apostle of Communism, Karl Marx, recognized that a period of dictatorship must necessarily follow the kind of revolution he advocated, and that the Revolution must maintain itself by force if necessary until a new generation grew up which knew not the old days and had been educated in the new ideas. So the Soviet system, which reads well on paper, is so devised that the 1 per cent. of the adult population which constitutes the Communist party is able to dominate the Supreme Council of the Union, though counting barely 10 per cent. of the members of the local Soviets. Further, it is not denied that the property of individuals,

native and foreign alike, has been expropriated without compensation and is now being used by the government without any payment for the capital invested. Further, it is not denied that there is much propaganda carried on against the governments of other countries, for the thoroughgoing Communist believes that he has a gospel that will save the world, and he has the zeal of a missionary anxious to save other peoples from their oppressors. The difficulty which Anglo-Saxons find in understanding the Soviet system is due to a fundamental difference of outlook. The Bolsheviki challenge the whole conception of personal advancement and profit making which has been the mainspring of the material progress of our race, and seek to eliminate these motives from their economic life. To find out how far they could succeed in this aim was one of the principal motives of our journey.

At the end of 1921 Nicolai Lenin, the dominating mind of the revolution, came to the conclusion that it would be impossible to pull the country out of the terrible mess in which it was then floundering without a modification of his policies, and he had the courage to reverse his course and introduce the New Economic Policy. How far the principles of Communism should be modified to meet the actual conditions of Russia has been and still is the principal issue in the internal politics of the Bolshevik party. How far such principles can be applied to the conditions of the industrial societies of our time is the principal interest which we of other countries have in the colossal experiment now being tried in the Republic of Russia.

## IMPRESSIONS OF RUSSIA

### ENTERING RUSSIA

*Leningrad, August 9th.*—This is the story of going—as our friends for weeks had been in various ways expressing it—out of the world of civilization into Russia, whence we might hope to return—how, and at what time, who could say?

The train for Leningrad leaves Helsingfors about ten o'clock in the evening. When, about half-past seven, we found we had completed all our preparations, we decided to go out on the pretty esplanade, which is a feature of the surprisingly cultivated city of Helsingfors, and have our dinner where we could hear the fine orchestra which plays there every summer evening. As we came out of the hotel, we noticed boys and women selling what seemed to be a news sheet of some sort, but, thinking it the local Sunday paper, we went happily along to dinner. Returning just as happily an hour and a half later, we were met by a most excited hotel porter. Had we heard the news? There was a revolution in Russia. Of course he could not tell us in just as plain English as that. English is not spoken very much in Helsingfors, but, between his excitement and his few words, we made out so much. Just for a moment or two we hesitated while he watched us, then we decided that, revolution or no revolution,

we must go on. His amazement was immense. He struggled for expression. Surely we would not go. Oh, yes, we would go. Then, with some difficulty, he got out the words "British Minister."

That seemed like a good suggestion, so the other half of this party managed to get the British Minister on the telephone. No, he had not heard of any revolution, but as to the wisdom or not of going on, his official reticence was perfect.

Perhaps this incident would not have impressed us so much had it not been for a great deal that preceded it. The general opinion of those to whom we had talked in England seemed to be that the very best that could be said for us was that we were courageous. Our Finnish friends had already mourned over us as over those who travelled to a country whence few returned. If we ever did get out of Russia, it would be to find ourselves with shattered health. Disease was so omnipresent. Only two nights before we had met two Americans—a Boston surgeon and his wife who had just come out of Russia. Their stories were not alluring. The difficulties of passports and permits, of customs examinations, of having your clothes taken away from you if you had more than the clothing set down in the permitted list, of extortionate prices everywhere, the rudeness, even the unkindness of the people, the virtual impossibility of doing anything or finding anything one wished—all these were expressed in at least double-column headlines. So great an impression did all that they said make upon us, that we forthwith packed a suit-case with our precious camera and all our clothing beyond the

permitted list and sent it to Switzerland, there to await our arrival when we should have escaped from this land of danger.

It is simple to imagine, therefore, with what feelings we entered the train and felt ourselves starting on the eventful journey. On such a journey your travelling companions are a matter of great interest. Are they not, like you, journeying into the unknown? It was not long before we were talking to all the English-speaking ones, displaying our superior knowledge of events in Russia by showing the evening bulletin with the news about the revolution. Unfortunately, that bulletin was printed in Finnish. Up to this moment we had discovered no one who had the magic combination of Finnish and English. Presently came the guard—a Finn—and he read the bulletin to a Russian who could speak both Finnish and English. Then we were all—two Swedes, two American college boys, one Chinese, one Korean, one Japanese, one German, and two Canadians—free of the story. There was a rising in the towns of Southern Russia, and in Leningrad and Moscow the troops were being mobilized. At that moment there was one of our party who began to think that perhaps, after all, it was a mad venture.

About ten o'clock in the morning we came to Rajajoki, the last town in Finland, where, for some reason which no one knew, we must spend two hours. Here, first, we saw the Russian passport officer, our precious passports already taken from us in his hand. For two hours we wandered around uneasily, wondering what he might be deciding about

those passports, but not too absorbed to notice two or three things of interest about Rajajoki, which seemed to us at that moment the last outpost of civilization as we knew it.

First, it was the railway station, commodious and clean, with that spotless cleanliness characteristic of Finland. There are five tracks in front of that station bearing witness to a time when thousands came from Leningrad, now only twenty-five miles away, to spend the summer days on the pretty beach close by. Now, Rajajoki is only a little railway border town. Near by were two or three tiny stores, and in one of them we found, to our surprise, raisins of a well-known brand put up in tiny packages, and costing less than they do in Canada, where we are several thousand miles nearer the source of supply. Recalling the tales of the extortionate prices of food in Russia, we bought a number of packages, and then were jeered at by our fellow-passengers, who said the Russian customs officers would get them all.

About twelve o'clock the passport officer appeared on the station platform. All the passports but one were in his left hand. Who would prove to be the owner of the one he was holding open in his right? It was the Korean, who, having served some time in the Y.M.C.A. in the city of Cleveland, was now on his way back to be national secretary in his own country. His passport was defective. The fault was not his. The Russian agent in Paris had made a mistake in the date of entry. The officer, who could speak English, was very courteous but very firm. The error was obvious, he admitted, but he

had no authority to let anyone into Russia whose papers were not in correct form. So back to Helsingfors the Korean had to go.

A few moments more and we were all—we counted twenty-seven passengers for Russia—on the train looking back with some regret to the security of Finland, while we crept slowly across the new bridge being built over the tiny border stream, and came to a halt before the station of Belo-Ostrov. Immediately, it seemed, we were in a different world. The station lacked all the comfort and cleanliness of the last Finnish station. Yet it contained an office for the exchange of money, where we sold our Finnish money at exactly the same rate of exchange as we had received in the bank in Helsingfors. Curiously too, the nature of the country changed suddenly, just as it does in Canada when one passes out of the rock and pine country to the west of Lake Superior on to the western plains. In Finland we had been as at Minaki or Kenora, and now we were in the flat farming country.

Another two hours we must wait ; every moment of it anxious. What about the revolution ? What about the permits to leave Russia, which must be secured before we could return ? Would the revolution make it difficult to get them ? Would we be held up in Russia, and, if we were, would our money hold out if prices were as high as we had all heard ? As we strolled about the fields around the station—fields still showing traces of trench warfare—we talked on one or other of these weighty points.

It must be confessed that our alarm had slightly abated by reason of the customs examination, which

had been described to us in Finland as an ordeal requiring much patience and self-control. It took place between the two stations, and we were not allowed to leave the train until it was completed. Two men came together, the passport officer and another. The passport officer's interest was in books and magazines. Had we any? Yes, we had, and we showed him two. These, being Soviet publications, might pass. Had we any other books? Yes, we had. Any about Russia? No. Well, the rest did not matter. Any magazines? No. As for the examination into our baggage made while the passport man stood by, it was more casual than is the usual examination made when one enters the United States. This concluded, the Russian customs slips were pasted on our bags, and the two men bowed themselves out of our compartment. Comparing notes with our fellow-travellers, we found that all had had the same experience, except that those who happened to be reading English or American magazines had to surrender them. By two o'clock we were on our way to Leningrad, excitement still running strong, though now more under the surface. Into our compartment came the Russian, a most kindly man, whom we knew through conversation to be of the old regime, though now working as an engineer in one of the great government works. What were we going to do, and whom did we know? he asked. Our answers being somewhat indefinite, as were our plans, he finally took out his card, wrote on it his telephone number, and told us, if we needed help, not to hesitate to come to him. The offer was made in kindness as we know, but it was



not reassuring as to the prospect of a calm time in Russia.

And so we came to Leningrad, arriving sharp on time. There was the same host of porters which awaits the traveller in other European cities. Outside the station we were set upon by a greater host of droshky drivers, each one of whom ardently desired our custom. In a few moments we were driving through the city on the way to the hotel. There was no visible excitement; no soldiers; no rushing round of anything or anybody, except the few taxis, which were the only fast-moving things we had yet seen.

Arrived at the hotel we found the same calm. There was no difficulty about getting a room. Later, we walked the streets for hours. Everything was calm and orderly. People looked at us, it is true, but no one seemed to think twice about us, and no one spoke to us. We came back to the hotel with the impression that if there ever could be such a thing as a city of the dead life, here in Leningrad we had found it. We settled down in a room of extravagant proportions, shabby now, though originally furnished quite luxuriously, well content that at least some of the prophets had proven false.

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## LENINGRAD

*Leningrad, August 11th.*—This must surely be the saddest city in all the world. Certainly that is the feeling we had as we drove from the station to the hotel—a feeling which grew in intensity through the several hours of our first day here, spent in wandering up and down the streets.

First, of course, one sees the buildings. The damage by war one can account for, but the damage by time and change is much more apparent, and much more distressing. For the most part, the buildings of Leningrad are of solid brick construction covered with stucco either white or pinkish-red, more usually the latter. This, unless frequently recoloured, gets faded and stained, and practically every building in the city is in that condition. Also, in the absence of any repairs, the stucco has fallen away from the surface in great blotches, giving it a most forlorn appearance. Many of the buildings are empty; from some all the windows have disappeared, great heaps of stone on the ground round about bearing witness to the fury of the mobs of revolution days. In the occupied houses there are few window curtains. The doorways and courtyards even of those houses—once the homes of millionaires (we drove along one street known formerly as the street of the millionaires)—have a dirty unkempt appearance. In fact a building in Leningrad which has

been freshly painted, or which shows clean windows with fresh curtains, is a most conspicuous object, though there are not lacking signs that the reconstruction work has been recently entered upon.

After the buildings you see, or perhaps I should say feel, the roads. Made sometimes of square wooden blocks, and sometimes of cobble-stones, they are broken and greatly in need of repair. But, perhaps here more than elsewhere, the process of restoration may be seen, for there is a great deal of the untidy appearance caused by road work, as more careful observation shows. Along the quays by the bank of the Neva, much destroyed by bombardment during the revolution, great reconstruction work is under way.

But it is the people of Leningrad who make the saddest sight. Of course we have always to keep telling ourselves that we have, like Alice, stepped through the looking-glass, and that nothing is as we have known it in our capitalistic world. In hours on the streets, in all parts of the city we have scarcely seen what we would call a well-dressed man or woman. In the hope of getting through Russia unnoticed, I had brought some very simple, almost shabby, clothes. Wearing them, I felt by force of contrast almost blatantly prosperous in appearance. The first day I wore gloves, but, not seeing another pair, I put them carefully away till I should be out of the country. The only other pair I saw in Leningrad were on a German woman tourist. Of course the time was summer, but it was cool enough for coats. Indeed I have never seen so many heavy coats on the street except in the winter

season. I think the women are wearing them to cover up shabby clothing, since practically all who do not have them seem to be making shift with clothes of several years ago, much turned and altered.

The regulation garb for men is the Russian blouse, familiar to us all from pictures of Tolstoi, from whom it is named. Oddly enough, though European women often affect them, the women here do not seem to wear them at all. Most of the blouses I have noticed have been made of a coarse cotton fabric, and frequently they are much soiled and worn. We see some men in the regulation costume of the Western world, but their clothes also look shabby and worn. Evidently the daily shave is not the fashion in Russia. Indeed we incline to think that the prevailing custom is more nearly that of a weekly one. This, with the popular shaved head and shabby clothing, gives an ill-groomed appearance which certainly is not pleasing. The surprising thing is that the people themselves look so much cleaner than their clothes.

But it is not the clothes, nor the condition of them, which is so surprising and so saddening as the look of the people themselves. At least 95 per cent. of the people on the streets of this city are of the stage of mental development—or look it—which we, in Canada, find among the unskilled labourers. When, occasionally, you see some who have an air of success or power, they, for the most part, carry themselves with an air of bumptiousness almost offensive. The difference between the mass of the people and the very few who seem to be of the

old regime is more marked than in any place we have ever been in. What has happened to all the people of the intellectual and middle classes who did not get out of the country is a constant puzzle to us. The vacation habit, still practised in Russia, cannot in these days of impoverishment account for them all. The first day we saw almost none. On our second night we went to a summer garden—a place of amusement in the garden where Nicholas the Second played as a boy. Walking in the by-paths, not talking much, and with a curious air of rigid self-control, we saw men and women of a different class. They were better dressed, too, especially the women; but so unhappy did they look, so like sleepers walking in an evil dream, that I wanted to run away. Occasionally an eye caught mine, then a message seemed to pass; sympathy on my part, I know; on theirs, or so it seemed to me, a prayer that I would not think what I was seeing was their Russia.

Though it seemed to us quite certain that the population of Leningrad is not one living under fear of a dreadful tyranny, no one, it seems, is really happy. We have heard no one laugh. Even the children seem to play with restraint. The people, though they surge up and down the streets, do not talk happily together as in other cities. Rather they seem to us like people in a dream; or like people who have had a terrible shock and have not yet recovered.

After you get used to seeing the people you have to get used to the astonishing mixing up of all sorts and conditions of mankind. Of course there were porters at the station, and taxi drivers, and hotel

porters, even wearing uniform, and servants. They carry your baggage and attend to your various wants, and, just like anywhere else in the world—unless it be Scandinavia—they take your tips. But they also, or people who look just like them, live in your hotel and eat in the hotel restaurant, and are treated exactly the same as anyone else. They even pay tips just as anyone else would. It would be shaving the truth to say that they have learned to act as people in such hotels and restaurants usually do; but then I fancy anyone can recall glaring exceptions even in bourgeois countries. But it does give people from the Western world a curious feeling of things turned upside down, to find at the next table a party of workmen with soiled blouses and shaved heads at the very moment when you have discovered that you are drinking out of royal glasses, eating off royal plates, and using a table napkin with the arms of the late Czar woven into it.

Over those table napkins we caught a glimpse of Soviet house-keeping. They were of a royal size with the royal arms in the centre, and the letter "N" woven in the corner, and they took mightily the eye of one American woman tourist. So much so, that she sent her English-speaking guide to barter with the hotel management for one of them, that she might carry it home to the United States. But the hotel management, though most courteous over the affair, was not taking any chances with the Soviet authorities. Ever so often, they said, there came around an agent to count the linen and the china and the glass; and the articles, or the wrecks of them, must be produced. Which brings out into

high light the first fact one finds it necessary to keep in mind all the time—if he wishes to ask intelligent questions in Russia, that everything belongs to the government. There are, of course, exceptions, since some private trading is allowed, but it is a good deal better to start with the rule and then learn the exceptions.

But if Russia is very different in this way from any other country, it is also very different from what we have been led to expect. For instance, we are not brave pioneers venturing into one of the danger zones of the world. Here are parties of tourists from several countries, including a family party of father, mother and three small children who have come from Norway just to visit Russia. We all go about just as we please. No one watches us, or asks where we are going; or suggests to us that something different from what we wished to see would be more interesting for us. Nor, so far as any of us who have compared notes can discover, does anyone follow us.

We ourselves, having so short a time to stay, are having the services of an English-speaking guide, who is really, though not legally, an Englishman. His father was one of those Britishers doing business in Russia in the old days who thought it well to become a naturalized Russian. Our guide has married a Russian wife, and so in these days finds himself neither one thing nor the other. However, the authorities have confidence in him to the extent of allowing him to act as guide, and we noticed that he seemed to have many friends and to be well considered. We told him the visitors this summer

were but the advance guard of a great host of travellers who would want to see for themselves what conditions are, and that he might become the Thomas Cook of Russia. And just there we again ran against that thing which must be always remembered, that the government runs everything in Russia; and so Thomas Cook, when he comes, will have to be a government Cook. Indeed there is at present the beginning of a travel agency, though now it concerns itself only with the selling of railway tickets. It is called Derutra, and from it we get one of our greatest surprises. Our tickets for travel to Moscow had been bought in Helsingfors, but it was necessary to visit Derutra in Leningrad in order to get sleeping-car accommodation from that city to Moscow. The moment we showed our tickets the office became excited. We had been charged too much in Helsingfors—too much by a whole chervonetz, which is five dollars. Would we come back to-morrow, when our berth tickets and chervonetz would be ready. Anyone who has ever had a railway refund in Canada will not blame us for being sceptical about that chervonetz, but it was there awaiting our coming.

Nor does it, as we have so many times been told, cost all the money in the world to travel here. As a matter of fact, we have better accommodation in this Hôtel d'Europe than we had in a well-known Montreal hotel, and for less money. Also the dinner is at a fixed price of two roubles, which is just over one dollar, and you can have it any time from one o'clock in the afternoon until eight in the evening. When we express surprise about these



things, we are told that this is not really Russia, and that we must wait until we get to Moscow before we shall know how things really are. So we suspend making up our minds on any question, and look forward to our time in Moscow with something akin to apprehension, for then we shall really be in the stronghold of the Bolsheviks.

In the meantime we explore Leningrad. The shops are soon disposed of. Except those in which food is sold, which are very large and most imposing in their array of food—all said to be the product of Russia—the shops are very poor in appearance, and there is very little in them. An exception might be made of the shoe stores, of which there seem to be a large number, apparently all government trust stores; and certainly one must except the bookshops, of which there are literally scores. Not only are there large shops, but along the sidewalks every one of the little kiosks, where one buys cigarettes and chocolate, has also numbers of small pamphlets, papers and journals, which seem to be eagerly bought.

In addition to these little street trading booths there are literally hundreds of private vendors. They stand patiently by the edge of the pavement tending baskets of rather poor-looking fruit, buns, fish and small trifles like shoe-laces. It is most curious in a country, where the government does most of the trading, to find the street vendor selling fruit just outside the government's store, which likewise sells fruit. We are told that this private trading is forbidden, and once in a while you may see shawls thrown over the baskets hurriedly; or, as at a given

signal, all the women at one corner will walk quickly away. There must be a mythical policeman in the background, but we have never managed to catch sight of him, nor have we seen anyone under arrest.

The happiest, if not the most novel hours, in Leningrad are those one spends in the Art Galleries and Museums. Here, certainly, sympathetic and cultivated minds have been at work. Both the Russian Museum and the Hermitage are in first-class condition inside. The collections seem to have been well arranged. In both galleries, so we were told, have been placed many pictures which formerly hung in the private palaces of the great families. Now they rival any collections which we have seen, being rich in examples of the art of Europe as well as of Russia. We proved to our own satisfaction, and even embarrassment, that great care is being taken of these treasures. My handbag was slightly larger than the regulation permitted. Before we left the entrance hall I was asked to show what was inside, and, not understanding what was wanted, probably did not do this as thoroughly as I might have done. Then I was asked to leave it with the door guard. To this I demurred. Certain valuable possessions never leave that bag, and it never leaves me. Our guide protested that everything was all right, and finally we were allowed to pass. Quite obviously word was passed from room to room that I was to be watched. There was always an attendant only a few feet from me, and when I opened that bag to take out my glasses, or put them away, there was great anxiety plainly visible. All

this was because, quite recently, both in Leningrad and Moscow, there had been attempts to destroy pictures by throwing acid on them.

The only other museum we visited was that known as the Revolutionary Museum, now set up in a part of the old Winter Palace. In my own mind I had decided that this would be an effort to show up all the horrors and oppressions which had led to the revolution. It proved to be nothing of the sort. The idea behind it was rather to show the history of the revolutionary movement from that Dekabrist Revolution in 1825 down to the moment. There was something very appealing about the way this was done. Infinite care had evidently been taken to get pictures of all the men and women who had sacrificed their lives for the movement. Faded photographs, tiny tintypes, were framed with care, and carefully lettered. Pictures of incidents, or accounts of them, were cleverly displayed. There were models of famous prisons, and of the villages in Siberia, and the houses there in which exiles had lived. There were also famous pictures by Rapin and other artists showing moments of crisis or sorrow, such as his terrible picture of the panic which occurred at the time of the late Czar's coronation. But the thing that most impressed me was the mind that arranged this exhibition, with its affectionate care that no one who had contributed should be left out. On a sudden I caught a glimpse of one side of Communism that I had not seen before. There had, I suppose, to be some such side to hold the allegiance of the men and women at whose photographs we were looking. For the most part they were the faces of people of a

high grade of intelligence and of a fine spirit. Whatever it was that won them was to be caught sight of here. This impression was deepened by the personality of the young woman who was detailed to take us through. She was obviously neither proletarian nor peasant, and in some way seemed akin to the people of whom she was telling. She was very simply, but more daintily and carefully dressed than any woman I have yet seen in Russia, and she spoke very good English, which she had learned at the Phonetical Institute, as she called it, in Leningrad.

Last evening we went for a drive to what are known as the islands north of the city. Here, formerly, were the summer villas of the wealthy people of Leningrad, and here on fine afternoons the reigning royalties and aristocracy were wont to ride and drive. The beautiful roads and parks are still there; so, too, are the houses, though some of them have fallen into sad decay. Most of them are used as homes for the thousands of children for whom the government is caring. Quite obligingly, a saw-mill beyond the river took fire, and furnished a spectacular sight; but we have not yet recovered from our astonishment that anywhere in a large city people should still seek to extinguish fires with a hand-pump.

This afternoon we visited the old fortress of Peter and Paul, which novels of Russian life have held up to us as one of the Czar's most cruel weapons of oppression. There we saw the famous prison cells where so many political prisoners spent dreary years, and there, too, the famous staircase, the railing of which is lined with strong wire netting higher than a man's head, so that no desperate prisoner might

commit suicide by throwing himself over that railing on to the stone floor below. There, too, we saw the arsenal being rebuilt, and, outside the fortress, a second great arsenal.

It was not, however, the prison of the old time, nor the arsenals of the new, which brought home to us how irrevocable is the change which has come to Russia. Rather, it was our visit to the great church which was built by Peter the Great within the fortress to serve as the tomb for himself and his descendants. Here, since his day, have been buried all the Czars save one, and their sons. Except two—Alexander II and his Czarina—they all have the same type of grave, a great white marble sarcophagus, in which has been placed the body, the sarcophagus then being filled with earth. On the top of each is a gilt cross, and on those of the Czars and Czarinas are special gilt corner-pieces.

In the old days, hanging on all the great pillars of the lofty nave, on the walls near the tombs, and on the tombs themselves, were icons, wreaths and crosses, of almost unbelievable wealth. We were taken over the church by the old servitor who had been there in the old days, and who recalled the old state ceremonies. From him we heard what sounded like fairy tales of the gold and precious stones which had been taken from the church, which, of course, was never used as a church, and was kept closed except at the time of a state funeral. The Soviet officials do not deny the stripping of this church, but maintain that it was done to aid the relief of the famine. One or two examples will indicate the immense wealth hidden here in honour of the dead

Czars. From the grave of Peter the Great, for instance, was taken his own icon, made precisely the same length as he was at the time of his birth, which had no less than eighty-three carats of diamonds set into it, not counting other precious stones. From the grave of Alexander III, father of the late Czar, six hundred wreaths of beaten gold were carried off. These had been sent at the time of his death, and two of them, weighing approximately forty pounds each, were sent by the British and United States governments, or so the old guardian said.

So one might go on enumerating, but what really stays in the mind is the contrast between those fairy-tale riches and the desolation of that church now. Walls that are dirty and stained show hundreds of hooks on which once hung the treasures; empty icon cases hang on the walls; near the tombs are empty stands; nothing at all remains in that church but the tombs and the fading red velvet canopy under which stood the Czar of the day when attending the state funeral. No heat has been in that building for eight years; one can see great cracks in the walls. Unless some care is taken of it, it must, according to the old servitor, inevitably fall, and that at no distant date. One can think that a change in the affairs of Russia might preserve the church and honour the graves, but it is unthinkable that the magnificence of the Czars in their graves, with all that that implied in Russia, can ever return.

## OUR FIRST DAY IN MOSCOW

*Moscow, August 12th.*—Certainly Moscow is different from Leningrad, almost as different as though it were another country. That much we saw even in the short drive from the station to this hotel, the Bolshaya Moskovskaja, situated in the street of the revolution, which is to say, in the heart of the modern city according to the map we have been memorizing with so much pains. That first impression was confirmed in the hours we have spent to-day wandering about the streets.

The city itself is very different, being of an Eastern picturesqueness, where Leningrad is distinctly European. But it is not at that so much that we have been looking as at the condition of the buildings and the streets, and the people. In Leningrad the reconstruction necessary after the war and the revolution is just beginning; here it seems almost finished. The Moscow Art Theatre is having its turn now—the scaffolding is just coming down; and to our astonishment, men were working at many of the churches. The streets also look clean. Women were sweeping them, and sprinkling carts were at work. The trams move along regularly and frequently, and ten different routes are served by quite modern buses. There is nothing forlorn in the appearance of this city—at least not at first sight.

There is just the same relative difference in the people on the street. First, one notes the Oriental aspect given by the presence of many people from the East. - Still are to be seen, as in Leningrad, the heavy, primitive-looking people, but now only as an element in the population. One sees many persons of a high grade of intelligence, and also many of a much more prosperous condition. It is most difficult not to let one's imagination run away, but many of the people we saw to-day look to us from their general air and bearing to be of the old regime. Moreover, there is not that stunned air over the whole city. People move along alertly, as though intent on the business in hand. Expensive motor-cars dash about, mingling with very worn ones, and with rickety droshkies.

Here, as well, men are wearing the Russian blouse, but it did not take long to discover that there are blouses and blouses. In Leningrad they were generally made of a coarse heavy cotton, but here there are many of a fine white duck, and some of a wonderful, heavy, homespun linen. I even saw one of cream silk, and several which were gaily embroidered, nor could I get away from the feeling that some showed the hand of a deft tailor. Many men are dressing in the European fashion, and not neglecting to keep their trousers pressed, and one jaunty-looking young man was wearing a tie and handkerchief that matched.

The women, too, are infinitely better dressed than in Leningrad. We saw some quite smart-tailored costumes on young women, and many pretty summer frocks made in the prevailing mode. Hats



are more common here, though the bright-coloured handkerchief still is the most popular headgear. Without seeing very many, I yet saw more gloves in an hour this afternoon than in the three days I went about Leningrad. There is an occasional bit of jewellery too, and many pretty shoes. On the whole our first look makes us feel that, if ever people were on one plane in Moscow, they have begun to settle into new levels, and between the top and bottom of these new levels there is quite a gap.

Our first day in the city has been a breath-taking experience. It has been so different from what everyone foretold. We made the journey from Leningrad in exactly the same kind of clean, luxurious train running over a fine road-bed. It arrived sharp on time, and the station porters and taxi drivers and hotel porters fulfilled their functions. Just as at Leningrad, we were offered grandeur at a high price, and, declining it, have found adequate comfort and cleanliness at a moderate one. Also, just as at Leningrad, we found a good dinner in a beautiful restaurant in our hotel at the fixed price of two roubles. Having thus satisfied ourselves that we should be able to stay here the week we had planned we went out to walk the streets.

At this point it has to be confessed that with unthinkable carelessness we had managed to leave behind us in Leningrad our letter to the British Chargé d'Affaires, along with some letters which were to be protection for us in case of trouble. We could scarcely hope to see them again. So, though we had not intended to use it until we had been a couple of days in Moscow, we decided that we had

better present our letter of introduction to Madame Kameneva, Chairman of the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, given us by the Canadian Committee in Montreal, and thus seek some friends among the authorities. So after walking round the Kremlin, and exploring the Red Square, we went to Madame Kameneva's office. There we were most cordially received. There, too, we stumbled on the Russian business day, which seems to leave everyone much leisure. This office, at least, opens at nine, and closes at half-past three, but then everyone works right through this period, nothing but a glass of tea being served between breakfast and dinner, which comes immediately after the office closes.

To our very great disappointment, Madame Kameneva, who is the wife of the People's Commissar of that name, and the sister of Leon Trotsky, is on vacation, and we shall not see her. We had heard that there was endless formality about this office, but the Deputy Chairman, Mr. Maisky, received us at once, "office hours or not." He made the usual polite inquiries—when had we come, and how had we enjoyed our trip, and were we comfortable at our hotel, which, of course, is government owned and managed. Then he inquired what we wished to do in Moscow. The other half of this party explained, with some Irish downrightness, that we should be very glad to be shown some things, but that others we wished to see for ourselves. In fact, we wanted to find out whether we could see things for ourselves. With a very human twinkle in the eye, which somehow did not match

one's preconceived idea of a Bolshevik official, Mr. Maisky assured us that it should be as we wished. Now then, what did we wish to see? We chatted away a while, and then were turned over to Dr. Niemen, who is the secretary, and is to make the necessary arrangements.

The best he could do for us to-day, he said, all his staff being gone, was to suggest things we might see by ourselves. From what he had heard of our conversation, he judged that one of the outdoor clubs, which are a feature of the new Moscow, would attract us. He would give us the address of the largest one, the Employees' Club. That puzzled us. Wasn't everyone an employee? Whereupon he explained that they differentiate in Moscow between the Civil Service type of worker and the other workers, the former being known as employees. Theatres were more to our mind, and we inquired for them, only to learn to our sorrow that all the artists are on vacation, and so there are no theatres to visit except an outdoor one where an operetta is being sung. There is, however, he told us, a "movie" which is causing some stir. Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford were in Moscow just last week to see it and talk with the director. Perhaps we would like that. He would give us the addresses of both places. There would not be anyone who could speak English at either place, but, at least, we could see. Then, if we came again in the morning, he would start the business of making the arrangements for those things we wished to be shown.

At six o'clock, having bargained with the droshky

driver through the agency of the hotel porter, we started for the Employees' Club. As nearly as we could guess, we drove about two miles and a half, and presently seemed to be in the outskirts of the city. By a bit of the good luck which seems to be with us on this journey, we found immediately on arriving at the club a member of the directorate who had learned to speak English in China some years before. Under his guidance we examined every feature of that club, which seems to me the most remarkable bit of co-operation I have ever seen. I cannot get away from the feeling that we were seeing something of the same side of Communism which we saw at the Revolutionary Museum—a side which is very different from that which the Russian Communistic system turns to the outside world.

Our visit to the club over, we decided to see if we could make our way to the theatre by the street car. Unfortunately, the address was written in the Russian characters, which are quite different from ours, and so we could not say the name of the theatre to which we wanted to go. It was equally impossible to understand what the woman conductor was telling us. Finally, we were put down and instructed by the sign language to take another car in a certain direction; but the darkness was coming on, and we thought a droschky the better venture. Arrived at the theatre, we managed with the little German we have between us to buy the tickets; but then it appeared that we had come in the middle of a showing, and apparently the Russians do not have our custom of entering a "movie" theatre at any time. However, we kept on asking if we could

not go in, and finally the attendant gave it up as a bad job, and decided to permit us to do so. He led us to what were so far as we could see the only two vacant seats in the big theatre, and we took up the tale of Potiomkin, as this film-play is called, in the middle of the first reel. It is a story of the mutiny of the Black Sea fleet, which was finally quelled by the soldiers of the Czar;—a most remarkable film in that it is not a story woven round a hero, but is a battle of forces of men's ideas, and of nature. It is a production of great skill and finish, and terrific in its condemnation of the old regime.

So far as we could see when the lights went up, the audience appeared to be almost entirely of those people who had benefited from the revolution, and were therefore in complete sympathy with propaganda of the picture. They took it in as calmly as though it had no relation to them at all, and when the picture finally ended, showing the soldiers shooting down with a ruthless regularity the sympathizers of the mutineers, old men, women and children rose and left the theatre without a single sign of approval or even of emotion. Remembering how certain pictures have affected audiences in Canada and the United States, we caught a glimpse of a measure of self-control with which I, for one, had never credited the Russians.

Between ten and eleven o'clock we found ourselves out on the street, on a beautiful warm evening. Prudence suggested a droskhy, but we decided to discover what Moscow was like at night, and so agreed to try and find our own way back to the hotel. Luckily for us, our sense of direction held.

We walked at a moderate pace through lighted streets and dark streets for a distance of nearly two miles—we have just measured it on the map—and finally arrived at the hotel. During that walk it seemed that no one paid the slightest attention to us. No one jostled us or spoke to us, except the beggars which are everywhere in this city. So far as we can tell, we walked with just the same freedom we have at home; and when we came into the hotel, feeling that we had greatly dared the terrors of Moscow, and that someone would surely ask us where we had been, and what we had been doing, a tired porter handed us the key of our room without so much as looking at us.

## THE LENIN MAUSOLEUM

*Moscow, August 14th.*—One of the first things we asked permission to see in this city was the Lenin Mausoleum. We had already walked round the outside of it, and had noted its spectacular position in the Red square. The reason for the situation of the tomb was made clear by that walk. In the early days of the revolution, someone with a vivid imagination had decreed that the leaders who fell fighting in that revolution should be buried just outside the walls of the Kremlin, against which so many earlier revolutionaries had faced a firing squad. So a long well-treed and flowered grass-plot was laid out running north from the famous Gate of Salvation, about two city blocks in length, and forty feet wide. Here, divided from the Red square by a low stone fence, are the "Graves of the Brothers." In the square, which has been a centre of life in Moscow since the city was, at the middle of the length of the grave plot, and close against it, is the Mausoleum. It is difficult to put into words the simplicity and dignity of that reddish-brown wooden structure. It is about the height and size of a bungalow, with the curious little balcony-like top from which speeches are made on great occasions. It appears to be built of four-inch timbers which are cut in different lengths so as to give a conventional pattern effect of triangles and straight lines. These

timbers are studded with great iron nail-heads. A very simple door, two steps from the ground in the front face, and another at the north side, are the only openings in the building. At night the upper part is illuminated by a red light, and the red flag which hangs on the old Senate House inside the Kremlin, also brilliantly lit up at night, seems from some angles to be hanging right over it. The simplicity of the structure is emphasized by the very ornate character of the great St. Basil's cathedral which dominates one end of the Red square.

Our permit to visit the tomb read "for the hour between eight and nine o'clock," and our idea was that, probably, a small group of tourists like ourselves would be taken through together. Imagine, then, our surprise, when, hurrying into the Red square at five minutes after eight, we saw from the doors of the Mausoleum to the Gate of Salvation a long line of people. Taking our places at the end of the line, which moved steadily forward at the rate of a funeral march, it was something like twenty minutes before we stood before the doors. By that time the line lengthened out far behind us, men, women and children coming on steadily two abreast.

The interior of the Mausoleum is as simple and dignified as the exterior. It is of wood with some plaster tinted a brilliant red, while the wood is black. Twenty steps down and one is in the funeral chamber. In the centre of a smallish square room, with a slightly raised platform around it along which one may go in single file, is the coffin. The base is that of a large sarcophagus in black oak. From sides and ends rise triangular sheets of plate



glass meeting in a single line on the top. There on the base in full view under brilliant concealed lights lies the body of Lenin. The head rests on a bright red cushion. The body is covered with what seems to be a worn red flag. The arms and hands lie outside the covering; the right one clenched; the left lying easily. The expression of the face is calm as in sleep. In fact the whole effect is that of sleep rather than of death. The massiveness of the head is the only unusual feature, though, since we had always thought of Lenin as a dark little man, it brought a feeling of surprise to see that he was fair rather than dark, and that he had a thin, rather straggling, but short red beard.

Certainly this slow march round the coffin was an extraordinary and moving experience. One is never more than four or five feet from the body. At the head and feet, Red Guard soldiers stood motionless. Other soldiers, alert to keep the crowd in the exact path, watched our progress. Silently, and apparently with deep feeling, the Russian crowd—we seemed the only tourists—moved steadily through this funeral chamber, turning their heads for the last possible look. Nothing is there to distract attention from Lenin, the only ornament of the chamber being another worn revolutionary flag which hangs in a case on the wall.

Twenty steps up again brought us out into the twilight and into the busy traffic of the Red square. For another half-hour we watched the people, noting particularly how quietly and seriously they dispersed after leaving the Mausoleum. As the bells of the Kremlin rang out nine o'clock, the doors were

closed, the sentries posted, and everything was once more as it is twenty-three hours out of every twenty-four.

For this that we had seen is a nightly occurrence in Moscow, and not some special day's crowd as we had thought. We have questioned every tourist we have met, and all report crowds of from 500 to 1000 at the time of their visit. Not content with this, we went back this evening (Saturday) to see what might be happening on a day which is a workers' half-holiday. That we might watch the crowd gathering, we arrived in the square a few minutes after seven o'clock, only to find that already over 500 people were assembled, though they must wait until eight o'clock before the doors of the Mausoleum would be opened to them.

It is impossible not to have in one's mind the contrast of these crowds thronging to see the body of Lenin with the utter desolation of the tombs of the Czars, and still more with the fabulous magnificence in which what was mortal of them lay in remote seclusion from their people; the warm humanity of this; the complete detachment of the other. Before our eyes was another contrast. Into St. Basil's cathedral, at the end of the square, was going a steady trickle of people for the Saturday evening service of the Greek Orthodox Church. This cathedral, which is a most interesting and curious example of Byzantine architecture, being divided into many small chapels, is also an example of what is happening to churches under the Soviet. It has two stories, the lower being at the street level, the upper approached by great flights of steps. The

government has taken over the building, and declared it a national museum, but the shrine in the lower portion has been left to the church. It was to this that the people were going. There were all kinds, young and old, men and women, even men in the uniform of the Red army. The chapel was crowded when we arrived, and for an hour we watched the people coming and going in twos and threes, while across the way the crowd swelled. It was both just and easy to remind ourselves that one was the spectacle of an hour, and that the other would go on steadily for three or four hours. But the contrast is not explained away so simply. Rather it illumines an idea which has been growing steadily as I have been looking at the new Russian regime from the inside.

There seems to me no room to doubt that Leninism is being carefully built up into a cult in opposition to Christianity. The minds behind the revolution have seen that the people of Russia must have a religion, and so have set themselves to put something into the place of the only religion they know—that of the Greek Orthodox Church. This is, I think, Leninism. In a way that language difficulties make it impossible to follow clearly, Leninism is being distinguished from Communism, and we have met people who tell us even with vehemence that they are not Communists, but Leninists. A young Russian tried to explain it to me. I quote him literally. "Leninism is the new edition of Marxism. Leninism is Marxism in the era of the proletarian revolution." I am not sure that I know

what that means, but I do think I see that Lenin is being made into the prophet of this new cult.

The Mausoleum is, naturally, the great instrument of the Lenin propaganda which seems to penetrate everywhere. But the visitor may observe other instruments. The Lenin name is spread abroad. The Lenin statues and the Lenin pictures are everywhere. Remembering the part that icons always play in stories of Russian life, I cannot help wondering whether these pictures are in the nature of Soviet icons. It is, by the way, interesting that in no picture or statue that I have yet seen does Lenin appear in the Russian blouse which seems now to be almost the insignia of the revolution. The Lenin rooms are another instrument. There is one in every institution one visits, even those devoted to children. Always there is a picture or a statue of Lenin, and a plentiful supply of books and journals, which we have been told is always propagandist material selected very carefully with a view to the interests and capabilities of the people who are likely to use this room.

To-night, I am wondering about these book stores, which we see everywhere, and the books in them which people seem to be buying eagerly. Not knowing Russian, we cannot attempt to find 'out what is in them, but since the government operates the printing presses and the book stores, we can see that here is another powerful instrument for the creation of any idea it wishes to generate in the people.

But it is the things which we have heard about the Communist party which I find the most astonish-

ing, and in a way most disconcerting. At first we flatly refused to believe them, deeming them against human nature; but we have had so much independent confirmation that I feel compelled to set them down. It has always been a matter of wonder to me why the Communist party, being the dominant group, did not increase its membership faster. It has still in its senior organization only about a million members, and, including all its juniors, does not include two millions out of the 140 millions in Soviet Russia. Now we find that there is no open, still less an urgent, invitation to become a Communist in Russia. You must prove yourself, and then having joined the party, you must live up to its standard of a decent life. You must not drink or gamble to excess. You must not be seen in a Christian church. The criminal code sets down more severe penalties for the Communist than it does for the ordinary man. In case of embezzlement, for instance, the penalty for a Communist, after the sum embezzled has reached a certain amount, is death; for another it is imprisonment. Salaries are lower for members of the party than they are for other people, even in its diplomatic, consular and commercial services. But the hardest of all to believe, though I do now believe it, is that each member of the party is under obligation not to draw, however much he may earn, more than 225 roubles a month. If he earns more than this, it goes half to the institution for which he is working for its welfare work, and half to the party funds. None of the members of the party in Russia, we are told,

not even the people's Commissars, are drawing more than that much money. True, the Commissars are having motors, and travelling expenses, but we are told these are not more than the usual business arrangements. This sum which the Communists draw is not an absolute sum. Not so far back it was 190 roubles a month. It will be changed as the cost of living changes. It is, so the highest Communist we talked to told us, designed to be that sum upon which a man can live in utmost simplicity, but decently.

Here lies the real force of the propaganda. As divorced entirely from its ruthless political side, and as applied to the people within its circle of brotherly love, this new cult expresses itself in language very similar to the language of socialized Christianity, and approaches a religion. I said as much to a Communist to-day. "Madam," he replied, "I cannot permit you to call Communism a religion." "Will you let me say," I asked, "that it satisfies the same need of your mind or spirit that Christianity satisfies for me?" To this he assented, though I thought reluctantly, as if fearing the words.

An ethical system derived from the ethics of Christianity, but denying its origin. That seems too absurd a thought to apply to the Communism of Russia, as we from the West have seen it express itself in its tyranny and its cruelties; but I am sure that some zealots inside Russia look at it in that way. I find it disturbing. It seems to me something of which, perhaps, Christians of the Western world should take note. To take, even unknowingly, our

faith, divorce it from the person of Jesus, and then to present the result to the Russian and the Eastern world as something which will save the masses of mankind from their heaviest burdens, is surely to offer to Christianity a challenge which ought not to be lightly regarded.

## CONTRASTS

*Moscow, August 16th.*—For the most part it is the new Russia which we have been seeing, but yesterday we caught a glimpse of the terrific tragedy which the revolution has meant to those who were before among the fortunate ones. This is, naturally, the part of the revolution which we outside the country know best, but actual vision brings it home with fresh poignancy.

After attending service at St. Nicholas' church in the morning, where, by the way, we found a crowded church in good condition and a musical service of rare beauty, we went to the Sunday Fair held in the Smolenskaja Boulevard. There are three or four of these fairs in Moscow. They are somewhat on the order of Petticoat Lane known to all Britishers, except that, since the revolution, the vendors are frequently people of the old bourgeoisie, or aristocracy, who eke out a living precarious beyond our imagining by selling some of the personal possessions which still remain from the wreck of happier days.

The Smolenskaja fair, supposed to be the largest and best patronized, occupies a stretch of the boulevard about three to four city blocks in length. Two long lines of men and women sit on low stools at either edge of the drive, all that they have for sale spread out on the road in front of them. Up and



down the centre of the drive strolls the crowd. Yesterday it was large enough to make progress very slow, and we had frequently to wait for an opportunity to see some of the things offered for sale. All sorts and conditions of people were there selling all kinds of things, from the veriest junk of odds and ends of building materials up to ornamental bits of real beauty. I know that I shall for months lament the handsome samovars offered at moderate prices which the fact that we are travelling with very little baggage made it necessary to leave behind. Much of what was there for sale, many of the people selling, had little interest. But every now and then we came on a man or a woman obviously of superior intelligence and breeding. Then both the vendor and the thing sold took on a real significance. Once it was an old man selling two or three lovely bits of china and glass. He had, he whispered to us, been a "collector" in the old days. Another time it was a few old pictures—small engravings torn out of books they had illustrated—sold by a middle-aged woman for so small a sum one wondered how it could be worth while to come. From a young, strikingly good-looking woman we got a beautifully carved mother-of-pearl icon small enough to carry home.

It was while we were making our way down the roadway that my eye fell suddenly on a woman about my own age and kind standing quietly by the pavement holding out in her right hand—a faded old brown hair switch.

My guide's eye caught mine. "What in the world is she doing that for?" I asked.

"It is probably the last thing she has left to sell," she replied.

Somebody long ago had something wise to say about much in little. I think as long as I live I shall see the price of the revolution in terms of that faded brown switch and of the woman who sought to sell it.

In the evening we caught another glimpse of the tragedy of the new time for the people of the old, for then we paid a visit to Madame S., to whom we had introductions. So we saw at first hand the effect of the house-rationing system of the Soviets. This system is one of the most far-reaching efforts of the new rulers of Russia to equalise their people. Take the available floor space of living quarters in any city and divide into that the number of people living in the city, thus getting the number of square feet per person, and you will understand what has been done in Russia. Different cities give different results, but the Moscow answer is that something over 100 square feet of space may be given to each person. That, so nearly as the size of rooms will allow, is what everyone is having in this city to-day. If you are lucky and draw a room which has not quite space enough for two, you may still have it to yourself. If you are a lawyer, or a doctor, or a university professor you are allowed double space on the theory that these are both living and working quarters. Double space is also allowed if you are tubercular, or have some other communicable disease, or if you have a serious nervous complaint. But for the most part the people of Moscow, no matter from what class

they may have come, have about 120 square feet per person.

There is another condition which intensifies for many the distress of this confinement in small space. In the beginning the Soviet authorities, deliberately it seems, sought to mix up the various elements of the population. So into the apartments of the sometime well-to-do were brought workers with entirely different standards of living. Picture this condition in an apartment with a common entry hall used as store-room and a common kitchen, and you can easily imagine how the people of Moscow are making their homes. We are told that the conditions are less rigorous as to the mixing of people of different standards, and that it is now possible by the exercise of ingenuity to get into an apartment or a small house where the whole space will be taken up by family connections. But the impression remains that it is little more than possible, such is the shortage of housing space in Moscow to-day.

This matter of housing shortage and the question of divorce seemed to be intertwined, sometimes seriously, sometimes humorously. It has been said to us that this living in confined quarters is itself a cause of divorce. "We get so tired of one another, never having a chance to be alone," said a young woman, recently divorced. Humour comes in the situation which arises when, after the divorce, it is impossible for either party to get other living quarters, and, divorced as they are, the two people must continue to share the same room. This impossibility of getting other living quarters is

keeping many people from remarrying who are anxious to do so.

It was in what had been a large five-roomed flat in a good district close to the down town section that we found Madame S. In those rooms now are living nine people, Madame S. and her niece having one of the rooms. It is, perhaps, 12 feet wide and 20 to 22 feet long with a small bay window. In that room these two gentlewomen, members of one of the most distinguished families of Russia, carry on all the business of life. They sleep, wash, cook, eat, store their food and their clothing, and entertain their friends. True, the cooking might be done in the tiny common kitchen, but the standards of some of their fellow-residents make it pleasanter to live entirely in the one room. Having in my mind the picture of the lovely house with its spacious rooms which before the war was the home of this family, I suppose that room, crowded with even the necessary inexpensive furniture, looked smaller and meaner than under other conditions it might. Even now, twenty-four hours later, I don't know which feeling is uppermost—the sense of the pitiful tragedy involved in living on this scale for people used to the gentle and pleasant things of life, or intense admiration for the gallant air of quiet gaiety with which they shared tea from their samovar and Russian cakes with two visitors from a country to them almost unknown.

If yesterday was a day of contrasts from one side, to-day we have been seeing them from the other. This morning we went to visit one of the peasant

houses which the government is maintaining in the cities, as well as at many points throughout the country, in an effort to improve conditions among the peasants. These are really schools of practical instruction to which the peasants may bring their problems, and in which they may live for almost nothing while they are being helped to solve those problems. This particular one serves the peasants of the Moscow district and is housed in what was once one of the ultra-fashionable restaurants of Moscow. In its large halls are found exhibits of grains and soils and model machinery and diagrams and charts of all kinds, showing possible development of rural life and its industries. Its small rooms are dormitories where the seekers after knowledge are housed, while the largest room of all is the common dining-room of the peasant students.

"Our business," said the secretary who received us in the Lenin room, "is to teach a man how to make a living off three hectares." Since this is in our measurement only seven and a half acres, the problem looked to us practically insoluble. We learned that though the plots are very small around Moscow, the methods of using the land are considered to be fairly good. There is much kitchen garden stuff and fruit grown. The men work at making wooden toys and household articles, while the women produce homespuns, nearly all of this stuff in the stores being of peasant manufacture. It is thought, however, these small holdings may be made still more productive, and three-months courses are being held in the effort to effect this improvement.

I inquired as to what was being done for the women in the peasant household, and was told that as yet there are no courses in housekeeping, though it is hoped to begin them soon. The women who were there, and we had already seen several, had come in to learn to read and write, instruction in these peasant houses not being limited to farming methods. While we were actually talking there came in a rosy-cheeked, eager-looking girl of about sixteen. She was dressed in a spotlessly clean embroidered peasant's costume, and had, we were told, just arrived in Moscow. Through our interpreter we asked her why she had come. To go to school, was the reply. Further questions brought out that she had already gone through the country and now had come into the city to learn to be a doctor. For the present she will live in the peasants' house, not paying even the moderate charge made to others, and when the school year opens will attend a workers' faculty school. But just how she is going to be transformed from the very simple peasant girl she appears to-day into a practising physician is something we must find out from the educational authorities.

It was interesting to learn that the three peasant youths who were in the Lenin room when we entered, and who accompanied us everywhere during our visit, had not come into the city to learn to be better farmers, but to get some general education. They listened intently to that part of our talk which concerned relative wages and prices in Canada and Russia, and we were much amused to see scraps of paper and stubby pencils come out to

make notes of the Canadian figures. Those of wages seemed especially interesting to them. This conversation took place in the old formal garden of the restaurant. It did not take much imagination to see the tables set out, to hear the orchestra playing, and to picture the old-time happy bourgeoisie eating amid music and flowers where to-day the Russian boys listened intently to the lure of Canada in the very place which had been changed out of recognition in order to make them better Russians.

From the peasants' house we went to visit an institution known as the Exhibit of the Care of Maternity and Infancy, and a great children's home and hospital in the same grounds. This immense property was in pre-revolution days used as a school for girls, part of it being for the girls of aristocratic families and part for ordinary folk. The part formerly devoted to the aristocrats is now given over to the exhibit, much the most remarkable thing of the kind I have ever seen. Probably it is because the condition of illiteracy is so widespread in Russia that one finds everywhere an insistence on the pictorial presentation of facts and figures. So it is here. There can surely be no facts concerning dangers to be avoided or care to be given in relation to either mothers or children which is not here shown in a picture. Nor are these the more or less ordinary posters such as on our continent are used to reinforce lectures. The government has given employment to scores of Russian artists in the making of what are pictures of artistic worth as well as of propaganda information. Room after room was hung with these pictures, all

so skilfully worked out that we knew exactly what they were saying without knowing a word of Russian. Wonderful as this exhibit was, my attention kept wandering all the time to the magnificence of the halls and staircases and the beautifully decorated spacious rooms in which these girls of privileged families had formerly been housed. What impression, I wondered, was it making on the worker mothers continually passing through?

In this building was also a clinic for the care of mothers and children conducted much as such a clinic seems to be conducted anywhere. But in the grounds outside was a great institution for the care of orphan children as well as for the study of children having tubercular or syphilitic diseases. The orphan children, we were told, are kept in this institution until they are four years old, but the diseased children are held until they are cured. It being summer the children were all living out of doors, but we were able to visit the barrack-like buildings in which they are housed in winter, each building being one great ward in which eighteen children live. Every service in connection with this hospital is given without charge, and the great point with the superintendent who took us through, after he had told us of the success they were having in treating syphilis, was that before the revolution there had not been in all Russia such an institution.

On our way home we visited the new government restaurant which has just been opened in what was the restaurant of the great hotel now taken as residence for Communists. There, with an even greater mixture of people than we have seen before—



there seemed to be several grades of working men—we had a dinner of three courses, roughly served but consisting of good plain food, for a charge of one rouble, fifteen kopecks, the equivalent in our money of fifty-eight cents.

Back at the hotel we were astonished to find that the precious letter of introduction to the British Chargé d’Affaires had been sent on after us from Leningrad. Though we had telegraphed to ask for it, we had not the slightest hope of ever seeing it again. Here it was, however, tied up in a neat parcel with a couple of small articles of clothing we had also left behind, with a tag showing our name and the number of our room, just as is done in any hotel in Western Europe or America. More contradictions. They open at least some of your mail, but they carefully send on after you such letters as you may forget.

With this letter again in our possession we feel safer; for the warnings of our English friends not to venture inside the country without it do not die out of our minds as easily as have the diatribes of the Americans we met in Helsingfors. We have wondered very much in this week we have been in Russia how their experience could be so very different from our own. We have even made some careful inquiries. The explanation appears to be that they were taken charge of by an American resident in Moscow, who must surely have played upon their fears and exaggerated every possible adverse circumstance in order to justify the exploitation of which they complained so bitterly. The Cultural Committee seems to be trying to prevent

exploitation. It posts in its office a tariff of all charges. They cannot be called exorbitant. The rate for a guide, for example, is two roubles for the first hour and one rouble for each succeeding hour, whether you have your guide for two hours or for six or eight.

## CONCERNING WOMEN

*Moscow, August 17th.*—Ever since the first day we came into Russia I have been trying to find out the facts about the laws of divorce and marriage; even more than that, I have been trying to get at the Russian view-point on them.

To-day I have had an interview with one of the leaders of the women's section of the Communist party, and now know probably as much as I shall be able to discover in the limited time available.

It is a simple thing to get married in Russia, and just as simple to get divorced. For the former, you go before a Justice of the Peace, and sign his book—very much as in our civil contract marriage. If you want to have the church wedding, no one will prevent you, though it is no longer part of the legal marriage. If you want to be a common law wife, no one will stop you either. Your difficulty then will arise when you want to get support for the children of the union—all of which makes it sound like the North American continent.

But nothing on the North American continent matches the business of divorce. If at any time, even a few days after the marriage, one or other of the parties wants to be divorced, all that is necessary is that either he or she shall go before another

official and declare the wish. Few questions are asked. Are there children? Which name—married or maiden—does the wife wish to use? The record is made accordingly, the paper of divorce given, and there, if there are no children, the matter ends. Under the new law no divorce is denied, even though only one of the parties asks for it.

But if there are children, a very different situation arises. Before the divorce will be granted, one of the parents must agree to take the children. Human nature being the same in Russia as elsewhere, this is usually the mother. Then the father must pay to her for the support of the child or children not less than one-third of his income if there is but one child, and up to one-half of it if there are more than one. More than one-half he will not have to pay no matter how many ex-wives and children he may have. He must go on paying until the children reach the age of eighteen years, so that the divorced man has a pretty serious charge upon his income.

One of the first people with whom I discussed this law was a young Russian Jew, who was also an ardent Communist. He was vehement in his opposition, and graphic in his phrases.

"If I do not like my wife, I say to her, 'good-bye, you can go!' That is all right; but if I have a child, I must pay, pay, pay to that wife till the child is eighteen. You call that a fair law? I don't."

"Perhaps you could run away?" I suggested.

"Oh, be quiet, be quiet," he said, missing the English idiom he sought. "Wherever I go they

will find me, and, if I do not pay willingly, they will order that the child's share of my wages be paid to its mother."

"Isn't it possible to conceal the amount of your income?" I asked him.

"It isn't safe to try," was the reply, "for if the mother suspects it, she can go to the court and complain. Then, if the court agrees with her, they will put me in jail for six months, and fine me 500 roubles. So I just have to pay."

Even before I had had an opportunity to discuss these divorce conditions with any Russian woman, I had begun to think that there were many in the cities, at least, who did not resent them. These Moscow women—those in the shops and offices particularly—have a great air of self-reliance and independence. They give one the impression that their world is not unpleasant to them. It was one of these, a secretary, who gave me my first real surprise on this question of women. I was asking her to recall to Dr. Niemen that I wished to discuss women's problems with a woman prominent in the movement. "That will be very interesting for you," was her comment. "The position of women in Russia is not a false one as it is in all bourgeois countries."

Madame Boyaraskaja, the woman Communist with whom I was to talk, proved to be as much unlike my notion of a woman Communist as could well be. Nothing of the hawk-like eyes and hard mouth there. Instead, she was gentle of face and voice, a woman of the missionary type I thought her. In Canada—to me she looked quite as Canadian as

Russian—I should have placed her as the principal of a school in one of the poor districts still yearning over each new child and its problems.

With her too I discussed divorce, trying to explain to her the attitude of Western women as I saw it. "The chief difference between your country and mine," she said, in that quiet impersonal way in which the Russians express direct disagreement with you, "is that you are hypocrites and we are not." Before I had caught my breath she went on. "You know very well that in bourgeois countries, if a man tires of his wife, he, in effect, gets a new one, but he says nothing about it. We simply make it possible for him to be honest in the matter."

Nor could any argument I could offer make the least impression on Madame Boyaraskaja's belief that this was a good law for women. She showed me quite proudly a little pamphlet of laws concerning women which the women's section of the party had distributed widely among the women of rural Russia. She translated for me, and later I had the translation verified, the words in which the writer of the pamphlet called the attention of women readers to the rights of women under these new laws.

Of course no visitor discusses such questions intimately with many people, but I did manage to talk about the divorce laws with four people, two men and two women, all of them of different antecedents and view-points. I record for what it is worth the simple fact that the two women approved of the laws, while the two men were positive in their expressions of disapproval.

After we had finished with the divorce laws,

Madame Boyaraskaja and I talked of the political rights and opportunities for women under the new regime. Here again she had her word of criticism for bourgeois countries. In them, she remarked, fact and theory were not the same; in Russia they were, and, therefore, women being equal under the constitution had actually equal rights. They voted in the unions on just the same footing, sometimes being in unions with men, sometimes in their own unions as in the case of the house-managers' union, which includes all the married women keeping house. That is, it does as long as they have no servant; when they have, the servant is the house-manager and has the vote, and the mistress of the house, being a non-worker, is deprived of the franchise. Servants, though not general, are employed in Moscow. They are paid fifteen to twenty roubles a month and their food, with two pairs of shoes a year. For the most part they sleep in their own homes. They work eight hours a day, have all holidays off, and get extra pay for all overtime.

But to come back to political rights. In the factories, women elect one in every ten of their number to go to the workers' council, which is the first rung of the Soviet hierarchy. Here they work with the men, being divided into sections for study as their interests lead them. Together, men and women elect the delegates to the Soviets of the districts and provinces, out of which again the members of the Union Congress of Soviets, the governing body, are chosen. Thus, on the surface it would seem that women really have an opportunity to show their ability and win recognition. The fact

remains that there are no women Commissars, though there was one woman in the first group, Madame Kolontai,<sup>1</sup> who was later Russian Minister to Sweden and to Norway. Though she is credited in England with having negotiated one of the most brilliant commercial treaties of post-war days, she is not now on service abroad, but is attached to the diplomatic corps in Moscow.

Much stress was laid by Madame Boyaraskaja on the necessity of educating women in the time immediately after the revolution. The women were gathered into their natural groups, and there instructed. At first the intellectuals would not join at all in this work with the Communists, but now they are co-operating with enthusiasm, and are helping both with the writing and the lecturing. Of great assistance in this work are four women's journals circulating in different parts of the country. They were quite cheaply printed, but still were well illustrated, and were in some degree attractive in appearance. The surprising thing is that all four of them have a circulation which not only puts them upon a paying basis, but enables them to make a contribution to the party funds. As an instance of the zealous interest which women are now showing, Madame Boyaraskaja told me that in many of the country districts there are women who have set aside small plots of vegetables and fruits, using the income from them to buy these magazines, and distribute them among women who cannot afford to subscribe.

In Russia, as everywhere else, the position of

<sup>1</sup> Since appointed ambassador to Mexico.



mother and housewife, combined with that of wage-earner, places on the woman with children an almost intolerable burden. This is one of the injustices to women which, according to Madame Boyaraskaja, the government has set itself to remove. The commissariat of education looks on pre-school age institutions as a means to this end, and, therefore, pays particular attention to them.

But though I listened to what the gentle Communist was saying, my mind rushed back to the social conditions I had found at the factory I visited—conditions which seemed to prove that, for the present at least, the married woman worker is occupying a most favoured place. Each factory where women are employed has, either for itself or in common with other factories, two institutions for the care of children—a children's house and a kindergarten. The former cares for children from two months up to about three and a half years of age, and the kindergarten from that age until the eighth year. To either one of these institutions the mother may bring her children when she goes to work in the morning, and leave them there until the close of the factory day. In the particular textile works which we visited they worked the long and the short day, so that this regulation really meant that the mother could bring her child here at five o'clock in the morning and leave it there until between nine and ten o'clock at night. During these hours the child will be washed and fed, and played with, or taught to play as the case may be. It will be put to sleep at the proper hours, and taken out into the air for an adequate time. It will not

even be wearing out its clothing, for, as soon as it enters the institution, its own clothing is taken off and institution clothing substituted. If it should not be well, it will have expert medical attention. In short, that mother need not give a thought to her child even during the part of the day that she is off work, and for all this service she will pay not one kopeck, the factory being obliged to maintain this service.

Surpassing even these provisions are those which come into operation when the woman worker is about to become a mother. During two months before the birth of her child and two months afterwards, she toils not, but she draws full pay. For eight months after the birth, the factory will pay to her nine roubles a month, so that she may buy extra milk, and during all that time she will be permitted to leave her work every three hours to go to the children's house to nurse her baby. We actually saw this process going on while we were in the children's house, where there were 160 babies. Unfortunately, the kindergartens are closed in the summer so we could not see them. We learned, however, that mothers of children of this age could send them into the country for the summer, again without cost, and that from this particular kindergarten 240 children had been so sent.

There has been a beginning made at the work of arranging this same freedom for other women workers. Clubs, of which there seem to be literally hundreds, are having children's rooms attached to them, so that the women who want to take advantage of the educational facilities offered by the club may

leave their children in the charge of expert nurses, and have a free mind for their studies. There will, we were told, be very many more such rooms in Moscow this winter. Everyone we have asked agrees that the mother must take the child home at night, and that there is at present no effort on the part of the government to take children away from their parents and put them in state institutions. Two or three of the Communists with whom we talked told us we might believe this was true if only because there was not at the disposal of the government enough money to carry out any such project.

A conversation I had with another Communist at another time inclines me to think that there is more in this last statement than might at first appear. This Communist openly longed for the time when the government should have money. That was the ideal way of educating children in a Communist state. So far as might be, he followed it with his own son. "My business," he said, "is to make of my son a fine citizen in a Communist state. If, after that, he has any time to be my son, I shall be very glad."

There is another law which represents the extreme of the position now allowed to the women with children. It is translated by the phrase, "the law of avertment." Under this law, a woman who finds she is to have a child and who thinks for any good reasons—those of health, economic position, household arrangement—she has all the children she can care for, may go before a board of three people and tell them her story. If the judgment of

the board agrees with that of the prospective mother, she will be sent to an expert surgeon with an order, and he will perform that operation which in our Western world gains for him a jail sentence.

As I think over all these advantages which the married woman with children has gained in Russia, I cannot get away from the conviction that women, at least of the world of the workers, must have had an evil time in the days before the revolution, and that what I am now learning is the reaction from that position. There also comes persistently into my mind as I talk and think about these things a feeling that slowly but surely under this Russian system the idea of the home as the unit of the state is being broken down. I cannot find anything on which to base a judgment as to whether there is a deliberate intention to do this, but it does seem clear that the unit of the Soviet state is the child citizen, and that to his care physically, his education, and his grounding in the principles of Leninism, the state is giving its most zealous effort.

## THE THIRST FOR EDUCATION

*Moscow, August 18th.*—Yesterday I had the interview I had asked for with a high official in the Commissariat of Education. In consequence, I am crammed with information, part of it acquired at the interview, and part through reading the statement of their aims and achievements as set down in an official publication printed, for the benefit of visitors, in the chief languages of Europe; also I am full of wonder as to what will come out of it all, but, facts being the essential things to record, it would be best to get them down first.

That particular interview was so typical of all we have had that I must describe it. Of course it followed the usual rule that you are never allowed to talk to anyone alone. Behind the big office desk sat the chief man—the head of the inspectorial staff—we were told. He was, I thought, quite obviously of the old “intelligentsia.” Beside him sat another man, just as obviously of the proletariat. Next to the proletarian, a woman member of the Council of Education, who did most of the interpreting—most obviously a well-educated woman herself, and keenly interested in scientific education. Across the table from these three sat three of us—a Frenchwoman who has much the same interests as I, our interpreter, and myself. And then, all around, standing behind us, seated at the ends of the desk

were men and women from the department. It seemed as though they had just heard casually that we were there, and had come in to have a look at us. But they all stayed; they all listened attentively to everything that was said, whether in Russian or English. They never spoke, for the three people behind the desk did all the talking, one sometimes prompting the other, and the interpreter beginning every statement with the phrase "The comrade is telling." This was typical of all the conversations we have had. There is the greatest keenness here to know what it is that interests people from the outside.

Nobody could be ten days in Russia, if he were really listening, and not sense how keen the Russians are for education. They are just like a people who have long had an intense craving, and suddenly have found the means of slaking their thirst. It comes out at every turn. Go to a factory and there you find the children's house and the kindergarten for children of the factory workers; and for adults the workers' faculty and the university, or higher school, dovetailing into the working hours. Talk to a trade unionist, and it will not be long before you hear about the club, and when you hear about the club, it will be the educational opportunities that will first be told to you. Talk on the political organization, and you come at once on the fact that the workers' councils are divided into sections, and that each section is studying something. Soon you find that not to study is clearly to be quite out of the fashion, and human nature is still functioning in Soviet Russia. They have a phrase con-

stantly on their lips—"the liquidation of illiteracy." At first it seemed to be humorous, but soon it took on another colour as one sensed the eager effort behind it.

Russia was a country almost beyond our imagining in its illiteracy. In 1920 an all Russian census was attempted. It registered 117 million inhabitants, of whom 54 millions above the age of eight years were illiterate. The rural population naturally showed the greater percentage, only 278 out of every thousand being able to read at all. At once the All-Russian Executive set a task for the Commissariat of Education—the liquidation of the illiteracy of adults between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five before the coming of the tenth anniversary of the revolution. Put into cold facts, that meant that 17 million men and women had to be taught to read and write before October 1927. Nobody ventured the opinion as to whether it could be accomplished, but many statistics were offered us to show that this work is going forward at a rapid rate. A certain part of it, we were told, has been "summarily achieved." This is among the members of the Red army and the members of the trade unions, but there still remains the vast rural population.

It is not to read and write merely that these illiterate ones are being taught. The department directs its workers to aim at arousing an interest in knowledge and a class consciousness. Questions of Soviet state constructure and elements of political knowledge are introduced into the new primers, and yet, in spite of this double aim, it is claimed that an

illiterate person can be taught to read and write Russian—a most difficult language—in a course of three to four months of five or six hours a week.

But the illiterate adult is not absorbing all or even the chief attention of Narcom, as the department of education is known. Let us think of the workers' faculty for a moment. These are schools designed to care for the worker over eighteen who has not achieved in the ordinary school the grade necessary for entrance to the university or the vocational higher school. They have a three-years course; some have evening schools, some day schools. Some schools are attended by workers on full-time jobs, some by part-time workers; some by favoured students who have been recommended by local bodies for education at the expense of the state. Apparently a certain proportion of places are allotted to the various district authorities who send in their students. My little girl at the peasants' house, who is going to be a doctor, is, I find, one of those, and because she has been so chosen, she is going to have practically free board and lodging while she is at the workers' faculty and at the medical institute, and in addition she will be paid by the state twenty-five roubles a month as long as her work is satisfactory. The theory seems to be that she is educating herself to serve the state, and therefore should be paid.

These workers' faculties are, as their name says, designed for the workers, and students who pass through them get the preference in the higher schools, as the Russians call what is the equivalent of our universities. Just here I got in a question



as to whether anyone who is not a worker or a peasant had any chance of having the same advantage as my little eager peasant girl. "Comrade is telling," said the woman interpreter, in reply, "that the local Soviet has the determining power, but that no one is barred because he is the child of a bourgeoisie." But, she went on under the comrade's prompting, "if there are not enough places to go round, the children of the workers and the peasants get the preference." When I got back to the hotel with my pamphlet, I searched the figures to see what that absence of bar against the bourgeoisie might amount to. Here are their own figures. In the workers' faculties—workers 66.66 per cent.; labourers 24.44 per cent.; others 8.79 per cent. And in the higher schools there are, first, workers, labourers, and office employees, and then come persons of some intellectual specialty 10.8 per cent., and non-working element and their children 2.3 per cent. So whatever the law may be, the class that, before the revolution, got most of the education is certainly getting the least measure of it now.

The workers' faculty is only one of the openings for adult education. Their variety is infinite, I gathered from my interview—technical colleges and workers' schools both designed to give more technical education to workers, and closely related to industry or agriculture, or the great civil service. There is another type called an adult school which seems to be mainly political, and there is the vast amount of work carried on in the clubs. There are libraries, stationary and itinerant, and cottage reading-rooms, and, lastly, consultation committees

to give help to the earnest seeker after knowledge who does not fit in to any of the other institutions.

But the greater part of our interview concerned the regular school. It begins now at the opening of the eighth year of the child, but the state is trying to do a great deal for him before that time. Ultimately it hopes to have all the children in kindergartens from the age of three and a half. With a frankness which we have so far found characterizes all the giving of information, the comrade told us that at the moment in all the union only 2 per cent. of the children go to kindergarten, and in Moscow 8 per cent. "But," he added, "we know we cannot do it all at once. We have given ourselves until 1933 to get the system we plan applied to all Russia."

The regular school, which has the name of the Unified Labour School, divides itself very much as it does under the Canadian or American system, except that it is based on the idea of keeping all the children in school until the age of seventeen. The division is into two grades—a four-year period up to the age of twelve, and then a five-year period divided again into two periods, the first of three and the second of two years. Education is general up to the age of fifteen or the end of the first division of the second grade, and the last two years are frankly vocational. This is deprecated as bad education, and is, we are told, a temporary measure due to economic conditions. The Commissariat of education considers that the choice of a vocation should not be made before the age of seventeen.

But there is nothing much like our system in the school system described to us by the comrade.

To begin with, all text-books are swept away, and no subjects are taught as such. Each year the central council sets down five or six essential themes from which the schools work. Each theme must be treated in three ways, from the point of view of labour, of the social structure of the state, and, thirdly, of what the interpreter translated as naturalism, which I make out to be science. All the schools must work from the same themes, but the material used in the working out varies according to the locality. If possible they take all the themes set down, but this is not essential.

When the second grade is reached at the age of thirteen, the programme is built upon subjects—but the subjects are divided into three groups, six subjects in a group, the names of the groups being social, by which, apparently, is still meant the structure of society, humanitarian and natural science. This has a far-reaching effect. For example, literature is taught, said the comrade, not as literature, but as part of the social group, and then from the opening of the nineteenth century only. History is treated in the same way, but here only contemporary history is emphasized. After three years, this general education ceases, because all the rest of the way up, the emphasis is on practical or vocational education, the need of the state for trained workers being very great. We gathered from the comrade that it is this need of the state which determines this attitude rather than that the new Russians despise cultural education. If in any school the pupils wish to study art or music, it may be done “out of school.”

The moment the comrade had finished laying this system before us, the Western mind of the Frenchwoman and myself began to display itself in questions. We had heard, we said, that the children chose the teachers and managed the school. Was this true? This actually drew a faint smile. They did not choose the teachers, replied the comrade—the subdivisions of Narcom did that. Nor in the early grades did they manage the school, but they were encouraged to have their organizations, and to learn to control their own activities.

“Do you work to make the child independent of the parent, as we have heard?” we asked.

This is the reply which I wrote down as he gave it. “The school educates the child in conditions of the moment, but if there is a conflict between parents and children, the school is always on the side of the child. The school tries to work, not only with the children, but with the parents. If the parents need it, they are re-educated.”

“What about punishments?” was our next query.

“There are none at any stage. Only the general condition of the school can affect children.”

“And examinations?”

“Practically there are no examinations. They are never permitted as an entrance test, nor as a means of judging the work at the end of the year. The pupils are admitted into the class for which they apply for a period of two weeks, at the end of which time the school council must determine in which group the newly admitted ones should work. At the end of the summer term the school council

again transfers them according to the results of the whole year's work."

"Is education free?"

"In the first grade, yes, also in all rural schools; but in the city schools fees were introduced in 1923 on account of difficult economic conditions. But then there must always be 25 per cent. free places which are used for children of the unemployed, of cripples, of those on the list of the Red army, of parents employed in educational work, and for orphans. Members of trade unions do not have to pay more than 5 per cent. of their income, and for others there are grades of fees with reference to incomes."

And what about the pay of teachers? we asked, and were told that raising the salaries of teachers was one of the pressing problems of the Soviet government. The figures made that certain. The minimum salary for the country school teacher varies in the different governments with the cost of living, running from twenty-seven to thirty-eight roubles per month in the first grade, and thirty-seven to fifty-four in the second grade.

It was when we came to ask as to the length of school day and year that we stumbled on something which seems to relate the school very definitely to the Communist organization. In the early classes, though the children go to school for six days a week, they go for only four hours a day, this rising gradually to six. The length of the school year varies from eight to nine months.

"What do they do in the rest of the day, when only four hours is given to school?" queried the Frenchwoman.

"They are encouraged to enroll with young pioneers or the Octobrists, and work with them." These are the junior ranks of the Communist party, and it is officially set down that there are outposts of the young pioneers in practically all the schools.

"Do you teach Communism in the schools?" was our next query.

The comrade was very grave. "I have told you that we teach no subjects," he replied, "so we do not teach Communism. Nor is the child who wishes to be religious taught that he must be irreligious. But it is true that the background of everything taught is communistic. All our teaching is also frankly materialistic."

The first comparison with pre-revolutionary days came when we asked about the percentage of children in the schools. In the country there are 60 per cent.; in the cities 100 per cent. we were told, in the first grade. In the second grade in the country are only 10 per cent. to 15 per cent., but in Moscow and Leningrad about 75 per cent. But we would remember, would we not, that the number was increasing every year, and that by 1933 it was hoped that 100 per cent. of all the children would be in school up to the age of twelve years. Also, perhaps, we would take note that before the revolution there were no kindergartens, no summer playgrounds, that only 20 per cent. of the children finished the first grade, and that only 5 per cent. studied in the schools of the second grade.

The presence of people of different nationalities in the streets had roused our interest in the method adopted for the education of the many non-Russian

racers in the Russian Soviet. There is, we found, a special division of the department for dealing with non-Russian sections which is trying now to introduce the native language in such sections. In these cases, the Russian language becomes one of the subjects, and the instruction is done in the native language, the study of Russian being begun in the second or third class of the first grade.

Our interview was by now prolonged far beyond the time allotted to us, so we had to leave without learning what is done officially to foster the arts. But we have already seen and heard enough to know that, though the emphasis is now all on the practical, the Russian government is not forgetting the cultural side of life. Every art gallery we have visited has been in perfect condition, so was the Museum of the Kremlin, and all the treasures therein are displayed with sympathy and skill, as even a tyro like myself can see. We saw in Leningrad a huge conservatory of music covering about two of our city blocks, which we were told has never enough places for those applying. The same is said to be true of the art schools, and in both there is a system of assisted education for the talented youth. There is much talk everywhere about the theatre, and general lamenting that we have come when it is closed up, so that we cannot see its beauties.

The pamphlet, which I carried back to the hotel, has a long section headed Science in which the department sets out all that it is doing to foster the work of research. Certainly it makes a good story, and I am reminded that I have been told often that professors are now very well treated.

Talking to a Communist, who was telling me this all over again, I referred to the time near to the revolution when the tragedy of these men and their families was one which made the outside world shudder.

"That is all true," he said, "but you must remember that we had a new country to build, and there was not time to attend to everything. Besides, they did have a ration of bread—a very small one, it is true—a pound and a half of bread a week."

"What could they do with that?" I asked.

"Not much—but when the rest of us were only getting three-quarters of a pound——" I do not know anything about this, I only set down the conversation.

One thing I know, I had not asked in my interview: What is the aim of education in Soviet Russia? I hoped I should find it set out in the official pamphlet. Here it is.

The aim of the first-grade school is to teach children to read, write and reckon, and such elements of science as will give them, within the limits of their faculties and age, a correct understanding of their surroundings, of human labour, of natural phenomena, and of public life.

The aim of the first sub-section of the second-grade school is to give its pupils a complete knowledge of human labour activity as a whole, of the social organization of mankind, and of the elements of the laws of nature and public life, so as to help the scholar to become a conscious citizen of the Soviet republic.

The aim of the second sub-section of the second-



grade school is to train a mass of conscious qualified workers for certain branches of labour.

I begin to think I was wrong when I thought that the Lenin Mausoleum was the chief weapon of communistic propaganda. I think I found that weapon yesterday.

## KIEV

*Kiev, August 20th.*—Forty-eight hours ago we started on the journey from Moscow to this ancient capital of Russia. We have since then had two days crowded with interest. But never for a moment have we been free from an underlying feeling of fear lest disaster should overtake us. For we have left Moscow without that most essential of all travelling equipment—our passports. Without these we can not only not leave Russia, but will have no hope at all of getting across the countries we must still traverse on our journey home. We have gambled on the Russian system having an efficiency which we would scarcely expect to find even in Canada.

This country is one of permits. Having secured your permission to enter, you must, if you remain longer than three days in any one place, get permission to reside, and, before you can cross the border on the outward journey, you must have permission to leave at the particular point through which you intend to travel. The actual business of getting these permissions is not onerous, since the hotel porter and the passport officer, to be found in every large hotel, will for set fees attend to the matter. But, as porters do not generally speak English, complications will sometimes follow from the language difficulties. In our particular case our porter allowed us to think that he fully under-

stood that we wished to have the permit in time to leave Moscow by Wednesday of this week. It was not until Monday, when we were inquiring whether the passports had been returned from the Foreign Office, that we found that no applications had been made for these permissions to leave. Further, to our dismay we found that the office routine would not permit of our having them until Thursday.

Part of the next two days were spent in vain efforts to break that routine, but we came to Wednesday evening with no passports. Our disturbed feelings were not shared by anyone else. We might go quite safely, said the passport officer. He would send the passports by mail the next day. The hotel manager and our guide took the same nonchalant attitude. Receipts for the passports given by this Moscow hotel would allow the hotel at Kiev to take us in, and the passports themselves would arrive on the train following. What could be more simple? So confident were they, that we, having our sleeping-car accommodation for that night and being uncertain that we could get it for the next night, finally decided to take the chance of trusting the Russian services. I don't mind confessing that I spent a good part of the journey down planning all the things I would do while I waited in Kiev for the other half of this party to return to Moscow for those passports.

The train from Moscow to Kiev arrives about 5.30 in the afternoon. This morning we inquired as to the distribution of to-day's mail. Letters from that train, we were told, would not reach the hotel until the following morning. So we settled

down to wait until to-morrow morning. But about half an hour ago—at 10.40 to be exact—there came a loud knock at our door. Answering that knock we found a messenger from the post office bringing to us our passports, which had come safely by the Russian special delivery system. It is the most astonishing instance we have had of the change which must have come over the public services of Russia since some of the people whose books we have read visited this country.

Just before leaving Moscow we had another experience of this system of permissions. We have bought a very few souvenirs, among them some icons. Before we could take the icons out of the country they must be sent to a special office in the Department of Education to be stamped for export. Indeed it would be better, said the hotel porter, to send over all that we wished to take away, since there was sometimes trouble over things other than icons.

So all that we have bought, even to the small wooden toys, was packed up, and, escorted by our friend the porter, we went off to Narcom as the department is familiarly called. There each article was carefully examined, some of them under a magnifying-glass. The icons were stamped individually, and all the things were done up into parcels, tied securely with strong string, the knots of the strings being secured with little lead seals. The parcels then cannot be opened without the seals being removed. Only in this way are travellers certain to get their purchases through the outgoing customs examination, the purpose being, so we were

told, to prevent the exportation of any possible museum pieces.

The journey down here was most interesting. Spending the whole day in travel gave us an opportunity to see the country and the peasants who came in groups to meet the train at almost every station. Well set up, well fed, they all seemed—men, women and children. Indeed, one of the impressions which remains is of the quantity and quality of the food in this part of Russia. There are no restaurant cars with the trains here, and one must depend on the food brought by the peasants to the smaller stations, or on meals served at the larger ones. The luncheon we had at Neizhin for forty kopecks—or twenty cents—shows the kind of meals one can get. Roughly served in a none too clean station, the food itself was delicious and well cooked. For the main course the choice was a breaded pork chop, half a fried chicken, or a roasted squab, each with the Russian equivalent of French fried potatoes. This was preceded as usual by a soup and followed by a pudding, neither of which we tried.

This city of Kiev is, after Helsingfors, the greatest surprise of our whole trip. Thinking of it as the early capital of Russia, one is astonished to find it a most modern city with substantial buildings of brick and stone, with wide streets carefully washed each day, with a good tram and bus service, and with any number of beautiful parks and walks up and down the banks of the river Dnieper along which the city lies. Nor does the war damage, which is here seen in many places, seem to take from it its prosperous alert air.

It seems to us, too, that the people of Kiev are more contented, and certainly better dressed, speaking generally. Here, too, is the only place in Russia where we have heard people laugh. Both last night and to-night we have stood on the balcony outside our window and watched the crowds come down the street from the theatre at the top of the hill. We have heard the sound of laughter and that lilt which comes from happy voices when people stroll about under the summer moon, which has here to-night all the harvest glory it has on our own Western plains. The Russians in Leningrad seemed to us very sad, in Moscow very serious. The only approach to laughter we can recall in either of those cities was a very subdued sound of amusement which occasionally came from the audience crowding a summer theatre performance of what was evidently intended to be a highly humorous operetta.

Here, too, there is, perhaps, more independence. At least we saw an example of it this evening. To watch the sunset and hear some music we climbed to a park high on the hill overlooking the river valley. The sunset over, we attended the concert held in an outdoor pavilion in this park. To an audience of several hundred people this orchestra, led by a conductor wearing a dress suit, played exquisite music. His concert-master also wore formal evening dress, but the remainder of the orchestra affected the Russian blouse.

The hotel in which we are now staying reflects what seems to us the general condition of the Ukraine. Comfortable, even luxurious, it is shabby, as have

been all the other hotels we have visited. But, unlike them, it is at this moment in the hands of painters and decorators, who appear to have entered on the work of complete restoration. It has a delightful dining-room where, as in all good hotel dining-rooms here, we have really good music. I am not one of those travellers who mark spots by the kind of food supplied, but no one, I think, could live in this city even a day without remarking on the quality of the food and the excellence of the cooking. We agree that we have not had such food elsewhere, except in Scandinavia where, surely, is the best food in the world.

If only we could find someone who speaks English or French well, we would be able to find out whether we are right in our surmise that the paternal attitude of the government is not so all-embracing here. This morning on the streets and in the trams was an army of women operating a flag day just as we do in Canada. My German would only run to finding out that it was in aid of a children's hospital. That does not match with our Moscow experience, where all hospitals seem to be government operated and to be free, though this again may be a mistaken calculation from insufficient data.

To-day we had afternoon tea in a *confiserie* which in furnishing and in the food and sweets displayed would not be out of place in Paris. The proprietor told us it was his private enterprise and that, though things were much better than they were three years ago, it was still very difficult to get ahead. Nevertheless his place has an air of success nothing short

of amazing when one thinks how recently this city was the scene of bitter civil war.

No one would think of coming to Kiev without visiting the Jewish quarter, but the chance which took us there quite unintentionally this morning was one of those things which happen frequently in story-books but not often in real life. We were wandering about Podol—the oldest section of Kiev, lying down on the river flats, and originally created because it was a port of exchange for the traders who plied up and down the river—when we came on one of the open outdoor markets which abound in this part of the world. Strolling about among the itinerant traders who sell either from tiny booths or from any spot on the ground they fancy, we were trying to buy some soiled and faded pre-war post cards which a couple of old women were offering for sale, when an elderly man in passing asked me in French if I spoke English. He then poured out a torrent of words in a mixture of French and German which we made out to mean that he had had for months two letters from a sister in America which he had not been able to read because he knew no English and had not been able to find anyone who did know that language. Would we come with him to his house and read him those letters?

My ideas of wise things to do in Russia did not include going off with unknown people to unknown spots in the Jewish quarter, but there was no resisting his urging. As we went along through streets which he described as shambles in the days of "white" and "red" wars, he told us that before the revolution he had been "rich"; that years



before he had lived in Switzerland and had done work for a bank, which took him into many different countries; that he had spoken both French and German well. The wars left him crippled, and he lives now with a youngish wife and three handsome children in the tiniest of houses in one corner of a squalid court. But the eldest daughter, a girl of eighteen, is working half-time in a factory and half-time in the university, or the People's Institute of Education as it is called now in Kiev, and so is on the way up again.

Of course to make a good story those letters should have contained some news of great good fortune for the old man. As a matter of fact they were simple affectionate letters from a sister in one of the small towns of a middle western state to an older brother. It seemed that they had for years lost track of each other, and that only in the post-revolutionary period had they succeeded in getting in touch again. We translated the letters for him, promised to write to his sister, and found our way out of the Jewish quarter, which was itself as different from what we had expected as could well be. The streets were wider; there were trees and flowers; and, though there were these dilapidated courtyards with queer tiny houses built around them, there were also rows and rows of small houses built in terraces, and having, from the outside at least, a comfortable appearance. The children we saw were clean and fairly well dressed. In short, here again time must be working its changes.

## THE END OF THE ADVENTURE

*Lemberg, August 23rd.*—All the time we were in Russia the other half of this party maintained the stiffest of stiff upper lips. Nothing untoward was going to happen, he was sure, even at times when one had an uneasy feeling that just around the corner was lurking some unpleasantness. Once in a quiet moment I asked the question, "When will you feel safely out of this business?" That the nonchalance was not so real as apparent was, I think, proved by the reply: "When we are out on the plain speeding towards Lemberg."

Now we have crossed the plain and are installed in a very comfortable hotel in Lemberg with the Russian adventure closed. We went in with such high expectations of real adventure that it is almost disappointing to have to record that not once in the whole two weeks was there an unpleasant incident. We went into Russia one day behind the schedule we had made out while still safely at home, and came out the same one day behind. We feel confident we were never shadowed and even more certain that we went where we wished and did as we wished. Only once were we warned away from any building. That, on inquiry made during our last interview with our friend Mr. Maisky, turned out to be the building in which are still stored the Crown jewels of Russia, of the disappearance of which we have heard

so many tales. Somehow we gathered from the attitude of Mr. Maisky that that particular guard would not be warning people off that special pavement much longer.

We did not see those jewels ourselves, not having thought about them at all until just at the end of our stay in Moscow, but we ran across a woman traveller who had seen them ten days before. We did, however, see very many precious things, especially in the Kremlin Museum, and have come away with the feeling that there is a fabulous sum in the art treasures of gold, silver and precious stones still in the keeping of the Russian government. We have come away, too, with the feeling that these treasures are being cared for as artistic possessions rather than as possible spending wealth. One of the most amazing things for people like ourselves, who have always lived in a new and relatively poor country, is the enormous amount of gold and precious stones to be seen in Russia. To give only one example, when we go to museums in Great Britain we find the old Bibles and Missals bound in exquisitely worked leather; in Russia we find those same books with covers of just as exquisitely worked gold encrusted with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls.

The actual business of getting out of Russia was not without interest if only for the reason that we made the journey from Kiev to the border in those "hard seat" carriages out of which we had been warned to keep because of conditions of dirt and discomfort. It perhaps ought to be confessed that we had really intended to leave Russia without trying

them, not having found their appearance attractive. When yesterday morning—a beautiful warm Sunday—we arrived at the war-mutilated station of Kiev and handed out the place tickets purchased after such difficulty the day before, we found that they were for these same “hard seats,” or what is really a third-class car comparable only to the French fourth class with its bare wooden seats which can at night be made into bunks. For a moment I was dismayed. Eight hours in a car like that was going to be a long hard day. And the people! All kinds! Who could say which kind we would draw? But by the time the second moment had arrived I was quite ready to go through with the venture, and even a little ashamed of my first reluctance. So we followed the porter in, to find that our good fortune was still holding and that our companions in the section, which held eight people, were an interesting-looking lot. They were three school teachers going back to Berditchev, sometimes called the new Jerusalem, a Russian Jew of the small trader type we know; a big policeman-kind of man who was very anxious to be kind to us; and, presently, a Ukrainian high school inspector, who was a university graduate who had made a special study of Marxian economics. He, it seems, had been a bourgeoisie. “I, too, had a visiting card in the days before the revolution,” he wrote to me in French when we offered him our card with its Canadian address. Some day he is coming out to Canada to visit his old comrade who edits a Ukrainian newspaper, and then we shall hope to see him again.

There was nothing at all of the lack of cleanliness about this car of which we had been told. Though no paint or varnish had been spent upon it for years, it was clean enough, and the wooden seats were well proportioned and had high backs, so that there was none of the discomfort of the bench-like seat. In the afternoon a man came in with a small watering-pot, sprinkled the floor and carefully swept out the aisles. When we left Kiev it appeared that every place had been sold, and people coming for short journeys had to stand. Luckily for us no one minded the windows being open, so the air kept fresh. We had only been about an hour out of Kiev when a man came through the train selling hot tea and delicious rolls. This was repeated several times before we came to the border, though no one else had such tempting food.

Long before the advent of the school inspector, who with his written French made conversation fairly simple, the young women teachers and I were having a lively interchange. The train had scarcely pulled out of the station when I inquired whether anyone spoke English, French or German, of which last language I have about fifty words. Nobody responded; but not many minutes after, hearing a German word or two, I tried again. Then I found that one of the young women knew a few words of English, and one about as much German as I did. That was enough. We started right away, while everyone in the car drew around to listen. They were all gay light-hearted people, very different from the kind of Russians we had met in Moscow and Leningrad, very proud of the Ukraine and very

definite about the difference between it and Russia proper.

After a time there appeared in the car a young man who was collecting for the relief of the British miners. In return for a small contribution he gave us post-card pictures of Cook and Saklatvala. Inquiries were made of us whether we "loved" those men. No? Then did we "love" MacDonald? Yes? That did not help us very much with that crowd who "loved" MacDonald not at all, and Cook and Saklatvala very much, though they were vehement in their refusal to let us call Saklatvala a Communist. He was, like them, they said, a Leninist but no Communist. About this time they accused us of being bourgeoisie, an accusation we felt unable to deny. So far as we could tell it made no difference in their obvious friendliness. They had that same impersonal attitude towards things with which they did not agree which seemed to be a characteristic of all the Russians with whom we talked.

When the advent of the French writing young man made it easier to exchange ideas, they inquired what we thought of the proletarian revolution in the United States and Canada. We told them there wasn't any such revolution, and, so far as our judgment went, there wasn't going to be any in either the United States or Canada. They smiled tolerantly as one does at the unwitting child. But, when we explained to them that the Labour party in Canada had only two members in the Canadian Parliament, they appeared to be convinced that our opinion was worth more than they had at first thought.

All this time most of the people in the car had been crowding in the aisle and at the back of the seat behind us, everything that was said being translated into Russian for their benefit. Something brought up the name of Winnipeg, and in a moment I heard a shrill voice crying out "Ween-ee-peg, Ween-ee-peg." A little old woman pushed her way through the crowd, talking excitedly in Russian. She had a son, the others explained, who had gone to Winnipeg thirteen years ago. For the last four years she had not heard from him. Would we try to find him and get him to write to her? We said we would, but what was his name? Whereupon everyone joined in trying to say his name so plainly in Russian that we could write it down in English. The old woman, by the way, said she was not Russian but Jewish, a distinction which we are unaccustomed to hear Russian Jews making.

Like everyone else to whom we talked, our fellow-travellers wanted to know why we had come to Russia. We explained with the magic word "touristen." This was, as always, greeted by smiles of pleasure. It was an educated Russian in Leningrad who first explained to us the significance of those smiles. "We are so stale only seeing ourselves," he said, "that we are delighted when people from the outside come just to see us."

Altogether we were very sorry when our companions reached their destination and we were left to travel the last hour of the journey to the border alone. Now at least we were coming to the grand ordeal, for much had been told us of the difficulties of this last step in the Russian trip. At last we

came to Sheppatovka, the border station. Here we with our baggage were directed into the customs shed. Near at hand were the passport officers, and here also, ready to make himself useful, was the government Derutra man who could speak a little English. With his aid the passport business was soon concluded, and then a merry, boyish-looking customs officer started at our bags. With a wise air he looked over our books and papers. The packages so carefully sealed at the Narcom office in Moscow had to come out and have their little lead seals clipped off. This concluded we were free to pack our bags again. No more than on entering was any effort made to discover whether we were taking out more than the amount of clothing permitted by the government order. Nor was any other passenger on our train so checked.

The examination over, the customs man showed every desire to talk to us, but, as he had no language but Russian, we made little headway. I did manage to let him know that I wanted one of the little lead seals, and he in turn managed to let me know that he would like to oblige me but that the Narcom office must have them all back; another instance of the tidy Soviet housekeeping. Then as the signal to leave came he helped us with our bags back into the train in which we presently set out to cross the actual border.

Hard seats were now a thing of the past. We were back in the compartment cars we knew, but under a different condition. For trying to go out into the corridor to look at the country on the other side of the train, we found we were locked in. It



was now between seven and eight o'clock, and as the dark came on a mysterious hand thrust a wavering candle into the tiny lamp just over the door. In the flickering light it threw upon us we travelled the last of the thirty-five miles which lie between the Russian border station of Sheppatovka and the Polish border town of Zdolbrunow. Several times in the course of that journey the door was opened to permit guards to enter and re-examine our passports. The first two or three times it was Russians with the slow, heavy step and the slouchy uniforms of the Red army. Then after a short stop came a quick, alert step, and the rattle of a sword. The door was thrown open with an impressive gesture and there stood our first Polish guard. We must be across the border. It seems much longer ago than the twenty-four hours it actually is that, when the door closed behind that Polish officer, we simultaneously leaned forward and solemnly shook hands with each other. We had come safely out of Russia. With us were all the letters of formal introduction we had taken in as safeguards. With us too were the package of Keating's Powder and the box of sulphur tablets, the seals still unbroken. And secreted in my clothing was the little closely written black note-book which is to keep our impression fresh and clear when we get back home and this visit begins to seem like a dream. Of all the warnings we had received, none had been more definite than that which concerned the setting down of opinions while on Russian soil. Like most of the other warnings it too had little warrant, for I am confident that that

last Russian customs officer would have let me bring out twenty such books in my hand.

And while we were thinking of these things our train drew up at a well-lighted station, the door was unlocked and porters carrying our baggage guided us into the Polish customs room. Perhaps our imagination was a bit overwrought, for it seemed to us we had come into a different world. Here were smartly dressed soldiers moving about alertly, saluting still smarter and more alert officers. Here were porters who said "Sir" or "Madam" or their equivalents. Here it seemed to us, in that lovely summer evening was a clearer, fresher air, as, examinations ended, we went off for a smart walk while we waited for the night train which was to take us to Lemberg, where the Russian adventure, now ending happily, might be written down as safely concluded. In truth it had proved no adventure save such as any traveller of inquiring mind may take with safety and even enjoyment, if he have any curiosity to see this country of Russia, which in its present phase one can only call the country of contradictions.

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## A SUMMARY AND ESTIMATE

ANYONE who would venture to write about Russia in these days of intense and unprincipled propaganda on both sides must needs found his impressions on personal observations. From books and scattered articles one may learn much, and this we sought to do during the preceding year, but always holding opinions in suspense until the reliability of the information could be tested by personal experience. Obviously but a small portion of the country could be covered, and conclusions based on fragmentary data, but this must always be true of the traveller's account of any country. This then is first of all a record of what we actually saw and did, and then a record, for what it may be worth, of the conclusions of one of us on the present situation and the future prospect of this great country.

We entered Russia with warnings ringing in our ears. Sometimes at home, frequently in England and again in Finland, we heard dire predictions of what would happen to us—we would never get out, we would not be allowed to see anything but what the Bolsheviki wished to show us, we would be watched all the time, the cities would be fearfully dirty, the hotels not clean, ourselves objects of suspicion and offensive treatment. Two days before we left Helsingfors for Leningrad, an American doctor and his wife came out of Russia with woeful

tales of conditions in Moscow—a den of thieves being the husband's more moderate summary. Two hours before we left appeared a news extra with the report that a revolution had broken out in Russia, the rebels had seized many towns and the government was mobilizing large bodies of troops to suppress the rebellion. While in Moscow a copy of a London newspaper appeared with detailed accounts of the revolution and maps of the routes taken by the troops—including the route we had just travelled. But such things only whet the appetite of the Irish.

We crossed the Finnish border—a tiny stream—and passed at once from a country of rock and lake and timber into a fertile plain with St. Petersburg—Petrograd—Leningrad only twenty miles away. There were the usual passport and customs examinations, causing long delays but quite as easy and as courteously done as when entering—well, say the United States. At the station we were met, as everywhere in Europe, by the efficient porter, and passing through a vociferous cloud of droshky drivers found an automobile. The drive to the hotel gave us our first impression of the city as we crossed the magnificent Neva River, spanned by many fine bridges and lined with large buildings now sadly dilapidated. Many buildings were unoccupied, some bore still the obvious evidences of civil war, all showed the signs of ten years' neglect. The Hôtel d'Europe was a welcome surprise—well run, courteous employees, spacious rooms, though somewhat run down, an attractive dining-room with balcony, and all at prices less

than in Montreal. As quickly as possible we started out to see the town, on foot and unaccompanied. Before dinner we had walked for two hours up the famous Nevsky Prospect, around the enormous Admiralty building from which Peter the Great radiated his new capital, past the Winter Palace and the buildings formerly occupied by the Imperial General Staff and the Guards regiments, along the quays and back through a park. After dinner we started out again, and for two hours in the evening walked up and down the city's principal thoroughfare amid the throng of a warm summer evening. Not once were we spoken to or interfered with by anyone, nor did we see anyone else behaving in any other way than we might have seen in any other city. If the first day were to be taken as a sample, travelling in Russia would be disappointingly unexciting.

The next day we were fortunate in securing the services as guide of a former business man, the son of an Englishman settled in Russia, and with his valuable aid we spent the next two days seeing everything that time would permit of this great city. For great it is in spite of all its troubles. Before the war the city had a population of about 1,600,000. During the war it rose to 2,300,000. After the revolution it sank as low as 600,000. To-day it has come back to about the pre-war figure in spite of the removal of the capital and the army. Everywhere are the signs of dilapidation. The buildings are mostly of brick covered with stucco or of wood, and both painting and repairs have been suspended since 1914. Some buildings

show the effect of bombardment, and in others every window has been smashed as though attacked by mobs. The prohibition of private trading has closed hundreds of former business places, only the best of which are used by the government stores. And yet there are obvious signs of improvement. Some buildings have been renovated and more are being done. Roads and tram lines are being relaid, the quays being rebuilt, the parks renewed. Lenin-grad is like a man in a state of convalescence after a long and serious illness, but yet convalescent.

The journey to Moscow was made in a first-class compartment sleeping car, in good time, on a road bed kept in good condition and at a cost less than at home. Here we found a city congested with population gathered by the removal to it of the capital of a vast empire and not provided for by new building. Hotel rates were much higher, but not more than they would be in any other city of the size under parallel conditions. On the other hand, the regular meals were low—two roubles or \$1.05 for a four-course meal in the best hotel. It is in the houses that the effect of the congestion is most felt. Under the Soviet law no person may occupy more than a very limited number of square feet if there is demand for space, and there is demand for every foot in Moscow. We visited the home of one couple and found them in one room about twelve feet wide by twenty feet deep, which served for every purpose of family life. To those accustomed to the refinement of a liberal home the living conditions now enforced must be almost intolerable. Nor can one choose those with whom a home may

be shared. The poorest and crudest are mixed indiscriminatingly everywhere with the most refined. In fact it is this mixture at every turn of all classes and kinds which is the most frequent impression one gets in Russia. What the Bolsheviki have attempted to do, and in considerable measure have done, is to lift the poorest class up to the second class and to depress the third, fourth and fifth classes down to the second level. Thus in hotels, restaurants, theatres, everywhere one sees the constant intermingling of people obviously of widely different pre-war classes. If a common level is a desirable type of society it has for the present been attained in Russia.

But human nature will not stay long in bonds. In Leningrad the dead level had few exceptions. But in Moscow it was different. The women who could would not be restrained from dressing smartly, and many of them would have done credit to more fashionable cities. The men were less noticeable because of the fashion of wearing the Russian blouse—an imitation of the great Tolstoi or a submission to the powers that be, or both. But blouses may range from cotton to silk, from plain to richly embroidered, from home-spun to tailor-made. Constantly too one saw the obviously successful civil servant, perhaps a former business man, manner and dress alike telling of the superior man who could not be kept down to any level. One was reminded of the remark of a noted English observer, that a new class was arising out of the civil service—a class by right of superior ability. In the early days of the revolution the government

and the "intelligentsia" stood at arm's length, the government unwilling to employ them and they unwilling to work for proletarian masters. But necessity drove them together. The government found it could not carry on administration without trained men; the latter found they could not live without employment. Thus is time bringing recovery, forcing co-operation, strengthening administration and modifying extreme views.

At Leningrad and later at Kiev we were not in touch with anyone in authority. At Moscow we made use of a letter of introduction from the Soviet Agency at Montreal to the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which is presided over by Madame Kameneva the wife of one of the Soviet leaders and the sister of Trotsky. At the time she was on vacation, but her deputy received us most courteously and offered to assist us in seeing whatever we were interested in. We expressed our desire to see certain institutions and to secure certain interviews, but for the rest to be left free to go about and see for ourselves. Neither we nor any of the score or more of foreigners whom we met during our stay in Moscow could have asked for more courteous or obliging treatment. Again we were most fortunate in having as our guide on many of our visits a highly educated woman of the old aristocracy now working as an interpreter for this Society.

Of the things we saw in the Soviet capital two stand out in my memory as the most vivid and most significant. One was a remarkable example of the effort being made to develop, both physically and



mentally, the class of people who knew nothing of such advantages before the war. The other was the experience of probing into the economic thinking of the working men as we went through a factory, and later in an interview with two of the leaders of the Trades Union Council.

In Russia practically everybody is unionized and the franchise is exercised through the unions. This applies not only to workmen but to all kinds of professions and occupations, including house-keepers. Among these unions is one of employees in offices and stores which has subdivided itself for certain purposes into four clubs, the largest of which has 25,000 members in Moscow. This club has secured an athletic ground formerly the preserve of the well-to-do, and has greatly enlarged both its extent and its activities. We visited this club one evening and were shown about by a most intelligent young Russian who had learned his English in China. Here we saw hundreds of young men and women engaged in almost every conceivable kind of summer game (except cricket and baseball), and playing with a skill and vigour which made me feel that it would not be long before Anglo-Saxon leadership in sports would be challenged from a new and wholly unexpected quarter. Especially I noticed Association football being played on scores of corner lots and at wayside stations. But the activities of the club do not stop with the physical. On the grounds is a theatre in which are almost nightly performances by the dramatic and musical clubs of their own members. In another building is an art club in which art is not only studied but applied

to designing every new building, every advertisement, the costumes, the scenery, etc., etc., of the club's innumerable activities. Scores of better-trained people give their services gratuitously, so that every member may have the opportunity to develop whatever talent he or she may have, while the entire management is carried on by volunteers. That is what makes it possible to carry on with a membership fee of thirteen cents and monthly dues of five cents. I have never seen or heard of any finer example of mutual help and ambition.

We were told that this was only one of many such clubs carried on by the various unions. Its right to the first place was then being challenged by a newer club of building trade workmen. In the winter-time this club divides itself into nine clubs, whose members devote themselves to all kinds of artistic and educational activities.

The other experience was of quite a different character. We were offered the opportunity to see through one of the state factories for the manufacture of cotton goods, and for part of the time our party was divided between those who were more interested in the social welfare work and those whose interest lay in the manufacturing side. We divided forces and I joined a small group on the latter side, which included two Welsh trade unionists and a Polish American young woman who could speak German and some Russian. Our interest in the manufacturing process was only an excuse for seeing the workers at work. The factory did not differ from many others—well built, well ventilated, but rather old machinery and lacking many labour-

saving devices; the workers looked healthy and contented and seemed to present a wide range of intelligence. What was of special interest was the talk with them on the system on which the factory is operated, and on their ideas as to how the problems of production and sale are to be solved consistently with their ideas of management and pay. Especially interesting were our encounters with an ardent Communist workman who could talk German. It was an amusing yet striking evidence of Russian character that here and everywhere else everybody within reach left their work to listen to the conversation.

A day or two later I had a long interview with two of the officers of the Council of Trade Unions at their headquarters, one of them a member of the Præsidium or General Executive. What I learned from this authoritative source agreed in almost every particular with what I had been told in the factory.

The Russian workmen start from the assumption that with the elimination of profits, industry is capable of paying greatly increased and ever-increasing wages, and at the same time of providing social benefits on a most generous scale. At the present time wages are fixed once a year by agreement between the trade unions representing the workmen and the managers of the Trust who operate a class of factories on behalf of the state. If the cost of living has gone up during the year there will be a corresponding increase in wages, and more if the profits permit.

But if the cost of living has gone down will the wages be reduced?

"No," was the emphatic and unequivocal answer, "the wages will never be decreased."

But what if the factory produces at a loss?

The loss will be made good out of the profits of other factories in the same trust.

But what if all make a loss?

The government will meet the loss.

But what if the goods are produced at too high a cost to be sold?

There is an almost unlimited market in Russia capable of taking all we can produce for years to come at these prices, and we can keep out foreign goods.

Yes, but the time will come when the present shortages will be caught up.

Well, then there is the foreign market.

But there you must compete with foreign goods at world prices which may be lower than yours.

If necessary the government will sell any such goods at a loss and make up the loss out of the profits on other goods.

But if there comes a time of general depression when this cannot be done?

Faced with this ultimate dilemma the answer was simply, "We will deal with that difficulty when it arises—it is years off."

Thus the Russian workmen and their leaders reason. Behind the wall of controlled imports, with a consuming population of 140,000,000, with years of arrears to catch up, with a peasantry constantly improving its standards as the result of ownership and liberty, they feel secure till a new generation shall have grown up so imbued with the ideas of the new regime that any reversal of policy

will be impossible. It is a prospect which appeals to the town workmen who at present control the government. But how long will the peasantry agree?

In quite another direction similar inquiries were pursued. On what system are the factories managed? Do the workmen elect the managers, and if so, how is discipline preserved? Is the Communist principle "to every man according to his need" observed in the pay envelope? What do you do with the lazy man? To these questions we found it rather difficult to get clear and consistent answers until it became evident that no one answer can be given, for the Soviet industries are passing through a rapid process of development which makes it quite clear that the responsible leaders are grappling with hard facts.

At first the workmen took complete control of each factory and elected their own superintendents. But it was not long before it became evident that no one factory could operate by itself under their system and that supplies must be secured and distributed on some general plan and sales controlled. So too it was quickly apparent that technical knowledge was indispensable and must be paid for. Hence came the creation of trusts to manage each industry, and an ever-increasing reliance on skilled managers and technical experts employed and paid on commercial principles. The participation of the workmen passed out of the form of direct action in each factory into the form of indirect action through their trade unions. Now all questions of management as well as wages appear to have passed or be passing out of local hands into the conferences of general heads of the Trust and the unions. For

agreement between these they rely on the fact that both represent the same interest and have the same objects in view, and that there is no factor of employer's profits to bring in a contrary interest.

In respect to internal management the leaders were emphatic in stating that there is "severe discipline" in the factories, and that men who will not work are dismissed, though only after every effort has been made to make them see that they are injuring their own cause. In respect of wages it is abundantly clear that the Communist principle has been completely abandoned. Sixty per cent. of the workers in factories are paid by piece-work. Wages earned run from about 45 roubles a month for beginners to an average of about 130 and to a normal maximum of 225, at which rate men selected for superintendents are paid, but specially skilled men and technical experts make up to and even over 300 roubles a month. With such differences in pay it is obvious that equality is already a thing of the past, much more any idea of payment "according to need"; apparently human nature is not yet ripe for Communist idealism.

Moscow is a city of many striking and interesting buildings in the Eastern style. There are churches everywhere, ranging from the magnificent Church of the Redeemer, which holds 10,000 people, to little shrines enclosing some venerated icon. In an archway leading from the Red square in the square of the revolution is the specially honoured shrine of the Iberian Virgin, visited by a steady stream of the devout, while a few yards away is the sign put up by the revolutionaries—"Religion is the opiate of the people." On one side of the Red square is the

magnificent group of buildings within the Kremlin fortress, the heart of Russian power for several centuries and now again the seat of government. As one visits the museums, in which are carefully preserved the evidences of the incalculable wealth of the Czars, one is reminded of Versailles and gains a similar understanding of the inevitability of the revolution. But under whatever rulers Moscow gives one the sense of power. It is the natural capital of an empire that has only one rival and speaks everywhere of almost unlimited potential strength.

Everywhere in the city two outstanding rival influences confront each other—the revolution personified in Lenin, and the Christian religion as evidenced by the Greek Orthodox Church. At one end of the Red square is the gorgeous St. Basil's cathedral built in the sixteenth century. On one side, with its back to the Kremlin, is the mausoleum of Lenin, peculiarly effective by its very simplicity. Every evening hundreds of people wait in line for the opportunity to pay a silent tribute and gain a sight of the face of the man who was the master mind of the revolution. All day long the Chapel of St. Basil's welcomes the devout, whose loyalty to their Church has stood firm through all these years of adversity. So throughout the city great buildings float the red flag that signifies a branch of the Soviet government, while the cross crowns the tower of a beautiful open church. The days of open and bitter conflict between these forces have passed. It has become a question of endurance or reconciliation.

To the Communist the revolution has become a religion. With all the fervour of a zealot he preaches

his doctrine at every turn—in the theatres, the schools, the museums of revolution, at every emblem of autocratic oppression or revolutionary sacrifice. The members of the party impose upon themselves a modest limit of income and devote any surplus to the cause. The workmen are taught the blessings of Communism by the tangible evidences of better pay and better care. No effort is spared to make the peasants feel that a new day has come for them as well, for everybody realizes that upon the peasants depends the ultimate fate of the revolution. We visited a house maintained for the benefit of the peasants of the Moscow district. Here the peasants are encouraged to come for instruction in better farming methods, the care of animals, cure of diseases, fighting locusts, etc., all illustrated by clever diagrams and pictures. Rooms and meals are provided at a very low rate and to students free. Incidentally but effectively the opportunity is taken to impress the peasants by diagrams showing how favoured the poor are under the present government, and pictures of Lenin and other leaders hang on every wall.

The government is ubiquitous. All the food stores and most other stores bear the initials G.U.M., signifying government operation, and they boast that in these stores there is one fixed price for all, while everywhere else there is dickering. The operas and theatres are owned and operated by the government or the municipality, and in a summer garden we saw an operetta brilliantly performed and staged to a crowded house at prices ranging from \$1.00 to \$3.00 a seat. Cinemas are numerous, and are frequently used for pictures with a propaganda



motive like the one of the Black Sea mutiny which we saw. But private trading breaks through in spite of all restriction. There are fruit and flower and knick-knack vendors by the hundred, great free markets in every section, and book stores and stalls innumerable. Much of this is illicit but winked at for peace' sake, and it grows.

But great as are the efforts of the government, abject poverty stares in one's face at every turn. There are multitudes of beggars in every city of all ages, some the sad remnant of former wealth. Worst of all is the tribe of vagabond boys who will neither work nor go to school—a breed of future criminals. The task of reconstructing so enormous a country would be a herculean one no matter what the type of society aimed at might be. The question for Russia to-day is—can the Communist system stand the strain long enough to rebuild the nation, or will it break down under the pressure of economic necessities?

From Moscow to the capital of the Ukraine is a journey of 475 miles, travelled in twenty-two hours in a train carrying two high-class compartment sleepers and ten hard-seat coaches convertible into lying-down places. The fares in the hard-seat cars are phenomenally low ( $1\frac{1}{4}$  c. per mile), but even with all the penalties imposed upon luxury our fares were less than at home. The country was much less fertile than I had expected and the crops very light. Only in the western part of the Ukraine did we find farms comparable to those in Canada. The fields are fenceless and though some are large, they are for the most part tiny holdings which to us seem incapable of economic production. But the people

though poor looked healthy and happy, working with an industry unknown in America, but also with a lack of that driving energy which accomplishes so much at home. Everywhere in Russia it seemed to take two men to do one man's job.

The Ukraine is the great black earth wheat belt of Russia—an unbroken plain of great fertility. For centuries it was ravaged by Tartars and Turks—the “border” between the Mongolian hordes and the Poles and Russians. In an earlier period it had seen the development of the first Russian kingdom, and Kiev, its capital, was a great city in the tenth century. To-day it is a semi-independent Republic managing its own affairs, but part of the Soviet Federation for external affairs. Racially its people are a different branch of the Slav race and they insist on being distinguished from the Russians, as Canadians distinguish themselves from Americans. Since they number 23,000,000 they are well entitled to a place of their own in the European firmament.

Kiev, the principal city of the Ukraine, was the greatest surprise of the trip. We thought we were going to the least developed of the Russian cities and to a place so torn by war as to show few signs of prosperity. Its border situation made it a centre of conflict and ambition for Red and White, for Russian, German, Pole and Ukrainian Nationalist. Twelve times it was bombarded and captured. Small wonder that we expected to find it dilapidated. Instead we found the most progressive and prosperous of the Russian cities. The stores were better and busier, the streets in excellent order, the parks large and full of people enjoying the magnificent

panorama of the Dnieper River which the heights afford ; an open-air concert hall seating 1200 people with an orchestra of sixty pieces playing nightly, the hotel excellent, a combined tram and bus service, a magnificent old cathedral and other fine churches—in short, a city that any country might be proud of. Nothing but the natural wealth of the Ukraine could explain such a revival or give a solid foundation for a city already numbering 430,000 people. Even in the Jewish quarter, the scene of many terrible *pogroms*, there was every evidence of vigorous life.

There remained for us yet another most interesting and unexpected experience. Almost all travellers to Russia enter via Berlin and Warsaw, or at least leave that way. We were planning to leave Russia as it were by going over the back fence and to enter Poland over its back fence. Apparently that did not seem possible to the passport office, so they granted the permit without which we could not leave Russia, but made it read via the wrong frontier point. There was nothing to do but go as directed, though it meant an all-day journey and a roundabout route, and thus we gained our experience of the hard-seat cars. Those who can recall the oldest style of our second-class coaches will understand. But fortune favoured us again. Beside us were three young ladies, school teachers returning for the opening of the Fall term, and later they were joined by an inspector of high schools. In a mixture of English, German and French the linguist of our party talked with them for three hours, while the whole car listened. From them we learned much of the attitude of the Ukrainians to the revolution,

their faith in its future, their support of the new ideas, their curious but quite positive distinction between Leninism, which seemed to typify the revolution, and Communism, which they would not acknowledge at all.

Thus we passed out of Russia. We had travelled 1500 miles, visited three cities, whose population averaged over 1,000,000, gone wherever we pleased without escort or permission, crowded every hour of fifteen days full with observation and inquiries and searched for facts whatever they might be. We had not had one single objectionable experience, we had never been interfered with, we had had excellent accommodation at reasonable rates, we had found clean and well-conducted cities and railways, we had received courteous treatment everywhere. We had probed to the best of our ability below the surface, and sought to estimate the strength and permanence of the new institutions. We came out as we had gone in—keenly interested observers of the most remarkable political and economic experiment in history. We record what we have seen only to help in a fair understanding of the forces which are so vitally affecting the life of a country which for good or for evil must profoundly affect the whole world in the coming years.

What then are the conclusions of one observer?

In the first place, it may be said without the slightest hesitation that the old regime is dead and gone for ever. The return of the Czar or of the old autocracy in any form is inconceivable. Hundreds of thousands of city working people have tasted liberty for the first time in their history, and how-

ever many the crimes of the present government the people know that it is fighting for their interest and not for the interest of the privileged few. The Cheka may have been terrible, but no more so than the secret police of the Czar. They will fight to the death before they will again submit to the old rule.

Soo too with the landed aristocracy. There will never be any restoration. Millions of peasants have secured the desire of their hearts and they will never risk the return of the landlords. It was the fact that the White Guards brought back the landlords with them that turned the scale in the civil war. No power on earth can deprive 100,000,000 peasants of that which is theirs now and which they believe to be theirs by right. We may well feel sympathy for a class which comprised many of the finest of the Russian people, and whose relations with the peasants were often of the happiest, but their cause is bound up with that of the autocracy and it is lost beyond hope of recovery.

The importance of this conclusion lies in the fact that in every city of Western Europe there are large numbers of Russian *émigrés* waiting for the day of restoration. They are a disturbing factor in all international relations and gain the sympathy of many of those who direct national policies. The sooner Europe and America realize that there never will be a restoration, and base their policies towards the new Russia on that fact, the better for everybody.

In the second place, credit must be given to the Bolsheviki for the many reforms which they have initiated and are carrying on in spite of all the difficulties against which they have to struggle.

Especially in popular education are the greatest efforts being made, and by 1933 they plan to have a complete system of compulsory education in effect, and that in a country notorious for illiteracy. The "liquidation of illiteracy" is one of their favourite phrases. I have never been in a city with so many book-stores as Moscow. So too with physical training; games and recreation, till recently the privilege of the few, are now the opportunity of multitudes. Similarly in the provision made for mothers and children, for the sick and the orphans, for the encouragement of the ambitious learner, for training in health and hygiene. For the first time in their history the mass of the poorer people find themselves the first care of the government and enjoy advantages scarcely hoped for ten years ago. It is safe to say that no matter what changes may come in political life or in the rulers of Russia, most of these plans for social betterment will continue and be ranked first among the permanent and beneficial fruits of the revolution.

These two—the abolition of the old regime and the inauguration of new social policies—may be counted as the positive achievements of the Bolsheviki which will remain to their credit. But there are other respects in which the ideals of Communism have had to be given up already, and still more which will have to be surrendered unless they are prepared to lose all. It is essential to an understanding of Russia to remember that there has been a constant and rapid change almost every year. The Communism of 1926 is a very different type from that of the fierce days of the Red and White Guards.

There is perhaps nothing which has stirred up so

much antagonism in the Western countries as the attacks on religion. The sign on one of the chief buildings of Moscow, "Religion is the opiate of the people," expresses the sentiment of 1918, but to-day very little is heard of such propaganda. The churches are open and largely attended; the shrines on so many of the chief streets are constantly patronized. The present official attitude is that religion is a matter with which the state has nothing to do. Those who wish may practise it as they please so long as they do not use religion or the Church as an instrument of propaganda against the government. Attacks upon religion or the Church as such are discouraged, though still in the minds of many of the leaders Communism and Christianity are mutual enemies. We made special inquiries about the teaching in the schools and received most straightforward answers. Communism, we were told, is not taught as a subject but does pervade the whole teaching. Religion is neither taught nor attacked, but undoubtedly the whole tendency of the teaching is anti-religious in the sense of being exclusive of religion; it is frankly materialistic.

The antagonism of the Bolsheviki to religion is easily explained. The Russian Church was always an arm of the autocracy, using its spiritual powers to reinforce the weapons of brute force and inculcating obedience to the "Little Father." The rule which confined all the higher places in the Church to the members of the monastic orders separated the higher clergy from the people and identified them with the interests of the aristocracy. The enormous wealth of the churches was in the sharpest conflict

with the poverty of the masses. Small wonder that the revolutionaries failed to distinguish between the religion of Jesus and such a Church.

The day of persecution in Russia is over. The future of religion depends on the leaders of the Church. If they remain tied to the hope of a restoration of the old regime as the Catholic Church did in France they will lose the allegiance of millions of people. If, unlike the Bourbons, they can forget and learn by experience, the deeply religious Russian people would rally to the banner of a St. Francis with an enthusiasm which no political party would venture to withstand.

But it is in the economic sphere that the new regime will meet its real test. Primarily Communism is an economic creed, and by that creed it must stand or fall. It proclaimed an ideal: "From every man according to his ability; to every man according to his need." Is that ideal practicable in this generation in Russia or in any other country?

It was to this subject that I devoted most of my inquiries, and the answer appeared to be plain. The ideal Communism of 1917 has had to be given up when faced with the hard facts of selfish human nature. Men will not work for equal pay; peasants will have land of their own; self-aggrandizement is still the most powerful incentive to work and enterprise. Little by little the early practices have had to be modified. The managers are no longer elected by the workers in the factory; most of the men are paid by piece-work; discipline has become severe. But the real danger lies in the lack of capital. Industry and government are now being carried on



with the aid of the equipment of the past for which nothing has been paid. Industries are being operated not only without profits but without fixed charges for capital investment, and, what is much more serious, without any adequate provision for replacement. Now whatever one's opinion may be as to the possibility of carrying on industry without profits, it is obvious that no industry is on a sound footing which is not both paying for the use of the capital actually invested and making ample provision out of earnings for replacement. In the opinion of another observer whom I met in Moscow, Russia must get outside capital within two years or there will be an economic smash. But outside capital will never be obtained except on condition of the recognition of at least a large part of the pre-war debt. That involves not only a radical reversal of policy, but also the assumption of large obligations which must be paid out of industry.

In another way there is a grave economic danger ahead. A higher scale of wages, better conditions and social benefits on an unprecedented scale all cost money and increase the cost of production, and therefore the price at which goods must be sold. It is possible to protect their industries from outside competition, but what if the effect is to make the price to the peasant higher than he can or will pay? How long will the peasants submit if they get it into their heads that the government is charging them undue prices for their necessities in order to maintain city workmen on a scale of living far higher than their own? All over Europe the war has left a feeling of antagonism between town and country, and now it is

the country folk who hold the dominating position. If the government does not satisfy the peasants, it will not be long before it will be faced with a hostile majority in the Councils, for the peasants number more than 90 per cent. of the population. It is precisely this difficulty which is causing the present differences in the ranks of the Soviet leaders. The majority of the leaders are practical-minded men who recognize that it is impossible to carry out all their principles and are prepared to compromise as much as may be necessary in order to hold as much as possible. They realize that at all costs the peasants must be kept satisfied. The minority declare all such compromises to be a betrayal of the faith and will have none of it. They are prepared to swim or sink with their theories.

It seems to me, therefore, that in spite of all the progress which has been made in the past four years there are grave economic difficulties ahead. The Soviet leaders will be forced to choose between the loss of power and the surrender of everything which distinguishes Communism from Socialism. Lenin faced that situation in 1922 and reversed his course and introduced the New Economic Policy, but it takes a great and a powerful man to make and carry through such a change. A proletariat taught to believe in the advent of a new world will not be an easy people to deal with if it has to be disillusioned. But whatever may happen under the present rulers of Russia, I feel quite certain that no government will ever go back on many of the changes the revolution has brought about, and that the outcome will be a highly socialized state.

One other speculation may perhaps be indulged in because of its importance to the rest of Europe. The only parallel which history offers to what has happened in Russia is that of the first French Revolution. So far the parallel has been singularly close. Both grew out of similar conditions—bitterness between a small, highly privileged, wealthy class surrounding an autocracy, and the mass of the people—poor, degraded, oppressed, illiterate. In both countries statesmen who saw the storm coming and tried to remedy abuses were foiled by the influence of those who would yield nothing. In both the revolution began in the hands of Moderates, but passed in the fury of passions once let loose into the hands of Extremists and culminated in a Reign of Terror. Out of that came government by a committee—the Directory in France. That is the stage which the Russian Revolution has now reached. Will it last, will it be capable of guiding the country through the crisis which it must still meet or will it also bring forth a Napoleon? My guess is that a superman will emerge, but it does not follow that he will be a military conqueror. What the attitude of the reorganized Russia which will come out of all this strife will be to the rest of the world will depend more on the course taken by the other nations than on anything that happens within. The policy of the American government, and in a less degree the attitude of the present British government, are well calculated to produce a Russia which will be a menace to every Western nation.





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